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CHESS MAGAZINE

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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW:

JUDIT POLGAR

I HAD TO
GAIN RESPECT
FROM MEN
STEP BY STEP:
MOVE BY MOVE,
GAME BY GAME,
TOURNAMENT BY
TOURNAMENT

INTERVIEW:

JIVI HOUSKA

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ENGLISH
GM TOLD ME:
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CHESS HISTORY:
THE FIRST WARRIOR
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Women's Chess Today

From Vera Menchik to Ju Wenjun

By GM Aleksandar Colovic



Women Playing Chess by Leonard Campbell Taylor (1874-1969), British painter in the traditional style

Things are improving for women in chess. It wasn't always like this, though.

The number of women players throughout history has been small. Perhaps the first notable player was **Vera Menchik**, who in the period before World War II could play on equal terms with the best players of that time, beating World Champion Max Euwe and Samuel Reshevsky among others.

Vera, in a way, paved the way for Judit Polgar many years after, as the first Women's World Champion, winning the title in 1927 and showing her dominance with the score of 10.5/11. She held that title until her untimely death during the bombing of London in 1944. Curiously enough, in 1937 Vera Menchik married the editor of the very magazine you're reading now, Rufus Henry Streatfeild Stevenson. In honour of Vera Menchik, the trophy of the women section in the Chess Olympiad is called the Vera Menchik Cup.

After the war the Soviets also started dominating women's chess, with five World Champions in a row (**Lydmila Rudenko**, **Elisaveta Bykova**, **Olga Rubtsova**, **Nona Gaprindashvili** and **Maia Chiburdanidze**). However, of these five only the last two, Gaprindashvili and Chiburdanidze, could

While the rating list shows that the best men and women are roughly 200 points apart, don't forget that the sheer numbers of men playing chess are incomparably higher

and did play on more or less equal terms with the best men players. While they were far from the very best, Fischer famously saying that he could give knight odds to the best woman player and beat her, these two exceptional players continued along the path of Vera Menchik by playing alongside men with occasional successes.

Chinese domination

Chiburdanidze's loss to **Xie Jun** in 1991 marked the beginning of the Chinese domination in women chess. This domination remains until today, with the rare disruption like Susan Polgar's match win over Xie Jun in 1996, and the knock-out championship victories of **Antoaneta Stefanova** in 2004, **Aleksandra Kosteniuk** in 2008, **Anna Ushenina** in 2012 and **Maria Muzychuk** in 2015. The other World Champions were all Chinese: **Zhu Chen**, **Xu Yuhua**, **Hou Yifan**, **Tan Zhongyi** and **Ju Wenjun**.



Vera Menchik in London in 1933
(Source: Wikipedia)

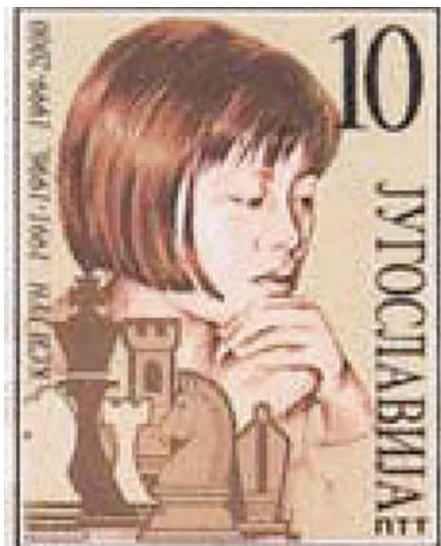
It is a bit of mystery why the Chinese have dominated women's chess for so long. While the Russians can and do fight on equal terms in team events, the individual results have been overwhelmingly in favour of the Chinese. They have a closed system in China where they work with their own coaches, following their own methodology. Since the Chinese men have also managed to establish themselves as among the very best, it appears that the system is working.

It is a bit of mystery why the Chinese have dominated women's chess for so long. While the Russians can and do fight on equal terms in team events, the individual results have been overwhelmingly in favour of the Chinese

The current World Champion is Ju Wenjun, who beat Tan Zhongyi in a match in 2018 and won the same title in the knock-out event **that same year** by defeating Kateryna Lagno in the final. If that doesn't make much sense, don't despair and please continue reading.

Women and men

The breakthrough of **Judit Polgar** in the mid-90s started to shift the rooted preconceptions that 'women can't play chess'. It took decades, but nowadays nobody is surprised at the successes of women players. After Polgar's retirement in 2015, there followed 25-year old **Hou Yifan** (World Champion from 2010-2012, 2013-2015 and 2016-2017), who is widely recognised as the women's best player, being the only woman player in the Top 100, even though currently she is semi-retired as she is studying at Oxford University.



Xie Jun on a 2001 stamp of Yugoslavia



Judit Polgar
(Source: www.juditpolgar.com)

Even though today's women players are incredibly strong grandmasters, they still face certain challenges, which, in my opinion, are artificially imposed. There have been many statements in the not-too-distant past (but also earlier, see Fischer's above, while Kasparov has also been dismissive) that tried to separate men and women when it came to chess abilities. While the rating list shows that the best men and women are roughly 200 points apart, don't forget that the sheer numbers of men playing chess are incomparably greater. If, throughout history, the same number of women had played chess we would not have had this difference.

The breakthrough of Judit Polgar in the mid-90s started to shift the rooted preconceptions that 'women can't play chess'. It took decades, but nowadays nobody is surprised at the successes of women players

The reasons for the increased standard of women's chess are the same as those for the increased level of chess in general - access to high-quality study materials, availability of coaches, impact of chess engines. This trend will only continue in the future.

Should women's titles exist?

The question of gender in chess (and not only) has always been a very sensitive one. Apart from discriminatory statements, we also have the issue of women-only titles and tournaments. Should they exist? Are they helping or hurting women?

There are arguments for both: they are helping because they are easier to obtain and this gives the women players confidence to continue playing chess - with the improvement

of the global situation in women's chess this makes even more sense; they are hurting because women players set their sights too low and this prevents them from reaching the maximum they can - if women are encouraged to become GMs and not WGMs then sooner rather than later we will see more equal representation at the top. It is difficult to say which argument is more compelling.

FIDE finally seems to be taking women's chess seriously

After many years of unclear tournament schedules and World Championship cycles the situation finally appears to be clarified.

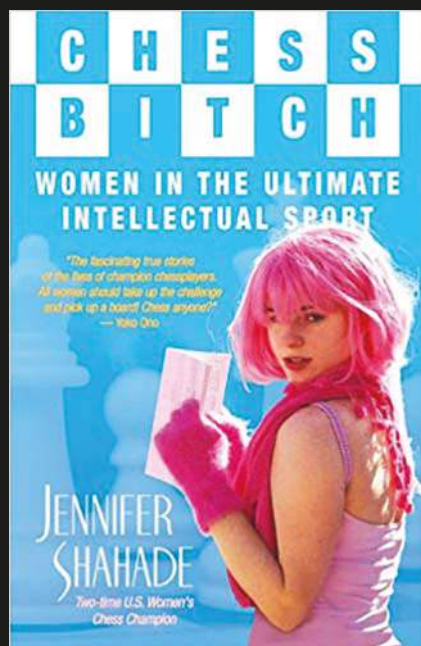
One of the first things the new FIDE changed was to make the women's World Championship cycle identical to the men's. This means Grand Prix tournaments with qualifications to the Candidates Tournament (already scheduled for May/June in Kazan) and a World Championship match. This further means more tournaments and more money in women's chess after decades of struggle with both.

These positive changes indicate a new level of organisation for women's chess today, better than any other time in history.

This year saw the first-ever women-only supertournament, the Cairns Cup in Saint Louis. The Saint Louis Chess Club has even made it their mission to promote chess to women and girls. FIDE and ECU have also made it one of their priorities. With a powerful sponsor like Sinquefeld and an official support by the World Chess Federation, things can only get better.

I wouldn't be surprised if we start seeing more and more women-only super tournaments and the popularity of women chess to increase. They are more exciting to watch, there are many fewer draws and their theoretical knowledge and contributions to chess theory are not to be underestimated (as they work with some of the best coaches in the world). This is definitely the best time in history for women's chess, but there is still a long way to go!

Not only men write about chess



While the majority of chess books are written by men, it is not only men who write about chess. There have been women authors who give a different angle on chess and how it looks from a woman's perspective. Perhaps the most typical in this respect are Jennifer Shahade's *Chess Bitch* and *Play Like a Girl*, while multiple British champion Jovanka Houska wrote the fictional novel *The Mating Game*, apart from her three Caro-Kann books and one on the Scandinavian.

INTERVIEW: JUDIT POLGAR



I HAD TO GAIN RESPECT FROM MEN STEP BY STEP:
move by move, game by game, tournament by tournament

By Milan Dinic; Photo: www.juditpolgar.com

Judit Polgar is widely considered to be the best female chess player of all time. She beat Bobby Fischer's record at the age of 15 as the youngest person to become a GM and is the first woman to achieve an ELO rating above 2,700; she has left a stamp on chess like no woman before.

The most successful prodigy of a project involving three sisters, coached by their ambitious parents in communist Hungary, Judit Polgar has - by example - been one of the biggest voices for gender equality and fighting stereotypes. Having always competed in open tournaments against both men and women, Judit Polgar has mastered chess skills and at the height of her career was the only woman among the

top ten players in the world (8th place on the 2005 FIDE World Ranking list). No woman chess player has been able to repeat this success since (currently, the top-rated female player - China's Hou Yifan (ELO 2658) - ranks 86th).

In 2014 Polgar retired from professional chess to look after her two children, but is still deeply involved in the game through her chess foundation which focuses on social development, education and lifelong learning.

Many of the male players look at women's chess as being at a much lower level. That is, objectively speaking, true'

As we begin the interview, Judit says she doesn't think she can be 'very helpful' on the topic of women's chess and the biggest challenges surrounding it today, pointing out that she was 'never competing as a *woman player* but as a *chess-player*'. However, after a brief pause to think, she dives passionately into the issue of the challenges women face in chess. Polgar starts by pointing out that male competitors tend to look down on the level of chess women play today. However, she doesn't think they are completely wrong in this view: 'Many of the male players look at women's chess as being at a much lower level. That is, objectively speaking, true'. The reason for this isn't that women are less intelligent than men; rather, the source of the problem is that they have fewer opportunities, argues Polgar. Also, she points out that men and women are not held to the same standards: 'For example, if the same game was played by male players, they wouldn't make those comments. This is something women always have to deal with'.

One of the explanations as to why men dominate chess is that, quite simply, not enough women play it. However, there is no reliable statistic or research showing the gender ratio in chess globally. In an interview for BCM in December 2018, Rex Sinquefeld - organiser of the Sinquefeld Cup and currently the biggest investor in chess - has said that his team have observed that, at school level, the ratio of girls and boys is about the same, but that girls lose interest somewhere along the way and nobody knows why or how to correct that. Judit Polgar's comment offers insight into

'Taking it as good enough the fact that a girl has decided to take up chess. You will find that parents are much more surprised if a girl is good at chess and interested in it, than a boy. It comes unconsciously because of society'

'I was raised to believe that women and men have the same brain, but every person is different so how far you can reach is not a question of gender. I grew up in this, I experienced this and I was playing chess with this attitude and, even today, I believe in this'

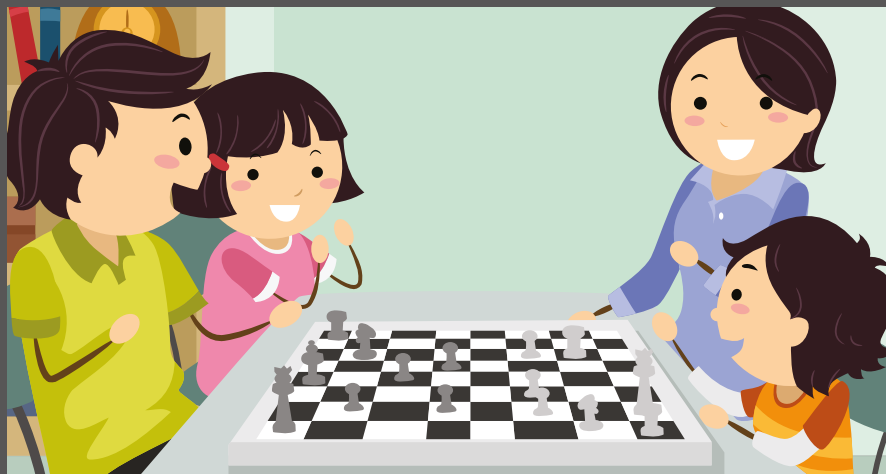
why this might be the case, and the bottom line is that parents may have significantly lower expectations for girls than boys when it comes to chess. 'Taking it as *good enough* the fact that a girl has decided to take up chess. You will find that parents are much more surprised if a girl is good at chess and interested in it than a boy. It comes unconsciously because of society', says Polgar.

Chess competitions specifically for women - in Polgar's view - have a drawback: 'If a girl takes part in women's chess competitions, she has to do much less and perform at a much lower level than boys in the open competition', leading to a poorer level of play. In order to tackle this issue, she says there should be a conversation 'where everyone is involved: men, women, boys, girls, parents, chess coaches, arbiters, the media... It's important that if a coach sees a talented girl they shouldn't see *a girl* but talent'.

Unlike her eldest sister Zsuzsa, who was a women's world champion, Judit refused to take part in women-only events, instead playing in open tournaments. But, she says, 'it is very clear that for now women like it that they have their own category. My problem is that it is as if we accept or take advantage [of a view] that there are lower steps for women. I'm not sure it should always be like that'.

'My story is different', says Polgar, pointing to the way that she grew up. 'I was raised to believe that women and men have the same brain, but every person is different, so how far you can reach is not a question of gender. I grew up in this, I

The best things parents can do for their children...



Judit Polgar's chess foundation focuses on using chess as an educational tool. It promotes development programmes and products, focused mostly on school-children. Parents have a vital role in a child's upbringing and that also includes chess. After all, Judit and her sisters, Zsuzsa and Sofia, are examples of this. Our conversation turns to a specific angle of this topic which is relevant for anyone wanting to teach their children chess: what are the mistakes parents make when getting their children into chess? The first thing Judit Polgar mentions is - expectations: 'Many time the expectations are too high. Or, in the case of women - low expectations.' Another big mistake is parents trying to train the kids 'when they have no clue about how that is properly done'.

So, what should parents do? In Polgar's view, 'the best thing parents can do is just to support the child. Don't criticise or be harsh on children - be there for them'.

And how did this play out in her and the experience of her sisters, given that their father Laslo - an educational psychologist - is both hailed and criticised for the ambitious project of creating chess geniuses of his three children? 'Difficult to say' says Judit, followed by a longer pause. 'Sometimes good and bad things become the same. Our parents were really there for us all the time and they took chess very seriously, pointing out how important it is what we were doing. But, sometimes, they spoke too much of how important that was, focusing only on chess.'

Fabiano Caruana is also an interesting example, having left school at the age of 12 to take up chess professionally. Such a decision could not be taken by the child alone but, ultimately, by the parents. Is this justifiable? 'It's a tricky thing' says Polgar. 'The key question is how the parents and the child feel about this whole thing. If the parents are ready to dedicate their everyday life to help their child advance in chess, and if they have a good plan, can finance it and do believe in it - then they should do it. But that's a very serious decision.'

On the other hand, says Polgar, 'it's also a very serious decision to send kids to school.' Unlike the common view that school is key for acquiring skills for social integration, Judit Polgar has a different view: 'I think that kids in school don't get as many social skills as many people talk about. [However,] it is quite easy to give those skills if you have private teachers or you do sport and courses in your spare time.'

experienced this and I was playing chess with this attitude and, even today, I believe in this'. True to her beliefs, Judit Polgar aims to implement this approach in events she organises for children. All children compete together, 'I don't have separate groups for boys and for girls'. As she says later on, 'I'm raising my kids - a boy and a girl - they do whatever they want and they won't be more successful if one was a boy and the other a girl'.

When asked about her own experiences and challenges during her chess career, Polgar instantly gave the following response as to her greatest success: 'To gain respect and to be looked at by men as a chess player, as one of their colleagues'. This, however, was a long-term path: 'I had to gain that respect step by step: move by move, game by game, tournament by tournament... It was a continuous battle to

challenge myself and others and to prove it. I had to prove myself much more than if I were a boy'. And she did prove herself by defeating top world players, including Kasparov, Karpov, Anand, Short, Spassky, Kramnik, Topalov, Smyslov, Carlsen...

Polgar stresses that chess should be considered 'as a mental sport, and that it has nothing to do with gender', but she does see the need to find new ways to encourage girls and women to compete. 'It would be helpful for the game if there are more events where we talk about the level of play without mentioning gender. Gibraltar is heading in a good way in that respect. In a decade, when men play against women, it won't be an extra factor or an extra issue that one of the players is a woman. It will be like going to the workplace and not being surprised to see a woman there as well'.

A bitter turned sweet relationship

In September 2002 Moscow hosted the third Russia versus the Rest of the World Match.

The Russians, or - rather - the Soviets - were victorious in the previous two matches, in Belgrade (1970) and London (1984). However, in 2002 the USSR didn't exist any more and, also, for the first time in modern chess history, the world had a woman among the top players.

The 2002 match is memorable for at least three things: not only was it a spectacle itself - pitting players from all over the world against a nation which is a synonym for chess - but, also, the Russians lost and the victory was sweetened by the fact that it was no other than Judit Polgar who delivered a blow to Garry Kasparov, defeating him in a line of the Berlin Defence he himself was a master of!

When asked was this her 'sweetest' victory - Judit replied: 'Yes, it was sweet. The game against Kasparov itself was a huge thing for me. I played the same system in which he was an expert. When I played with the white pieces my strategy was to attack his king as it gives the most unpleasant feeling. He was in good form back then and it was a great experience for me and a turning-point in our matches'. Polgar's victory helped the World team secure a 52-48 victory in the match.

But, things hadn't always been sweet between the two. Eight years before, in 1994, Judit Polgar lost to the then World Champion Garry Kasparov at a tournament in Linares in a famously controversial game in which he took a losing move back and later - when confronted by Polgar - accused her of lying.

'I had worse reactions from other men than Kasparov', says Polgar. 'From my side, I never had a bad attitude towards Kasparov. When I was a teenager and he took that move back, of course I was very upset. But, to be honest, he's not the only World Champion who did something like that. Look at Magnus Carlsen who is doing it in front of the camera [well, so did Kasparov in Linares, sic!] because he is so eager to win'.

But, things are improving, says the famous GM. 'There are more people now supporting ladies' chess such as my sister [Zsuzsa]. Also, there are other organisations. For example, Gibraltar aims to have 30 percent of players to be women. They also have other events where they pay a lot of attention to inviting top women players. Wijk aan Zee always has one woman playing. From this point of view, it's getting better and it's more open. It's also important that the new FIDE president is making more steps to increase the prize fund for women chess. The bar is slowly rising and women's chess is more appreciated and acknowledged'.

Women have also become bolder, suggests Polgar: 'because they have more chances, their mind-set is little different. After women had success in the open section they realise that it's actually a good way of competing. It's good to see



Judit Polgar vs Garry Kasparov,
Russia vs The Rest of The World Match,
Moscow 2002

When will a woman become world champion?

As though we've asked Theresa May when Britain will leave the EU, Judit sidesteps our question about a woman world champion diplomatically, stating - 'from my point of view that's not a big question'.

But, instead of being evasive like a politician, she explains: 'it's not a big question as it's only about one special performance. The real improvement for women in chess will be when events are merged for men and women. I don't know if we will ever have a woman world champion or even if we'll have more women playing in the open section. To become a World Champion you have to be very special, regardless if you're a man or a woman. Apart from some luck, there are so many details which matter. When you become a World Champion you become another kind of human being'.

Hou Yifan also playing in the open section with varied results. But she also has a big difference compared to her next rivals'.

Another factor helping women is that many of them now have good coaches. And, in some countries - such as China - national teams of both men and women have trainings together and that helps them all improve a lot, says Polgar.

The recently-elected president of FIDE Arkady Dvorkovic has announced an ambitious plan for chess, including having more women take part in chess events and increasing the funding for prizes. Polgar is cautious: 'I would be happy if Dvorkovich expressed views on this, if he has them' and she stresses the need to focus on the wider picture: 'Chess is a mental game. But, when we look at a plethora of mind challenges - maths, robotics, IT, we see that women are under-represented there as well. Actually, the society which excludes women from many different fields is a problem'.

'We'll see in the future how he [Dvorkovic] is reflecting on this issue. It's a nice thing he's making steps to raise the prize fund. But it's not just up to him, but to everyone', says Polgar, adding that 'women need to raise the questions: can we do it, can we be the same as other top GMs, can we be better? It's not only the guys, not only the society, it's all women - we have to take responsibility if we want to make changes. The question is do we really want to'.

EUROPEAN WOMEN INDIVIDUAL CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP 2019



KASHLINSKAYA CONQUERS EUROPE

By GM Aleksandar Colovic; Photo: EWICC Official

The European Women Individual Chess Championship 2019 took place from 10th April-23rd April in Antalya, Turkey. The total prize fund was 60.000 euro, together with 6.000 euro reserved for the best Junior players, the best Turkish players and Turkish Junior players, while the Association of Chess Professionals (ACP) reserved 4.000 euro for the best ranked ACP players.

It has been a good period for **Alina Kashlinskaya** (25). After winning the first women's prize in the Isle of Man in October last year, the Russian became European Champion in Antalya exactly 6 months later.

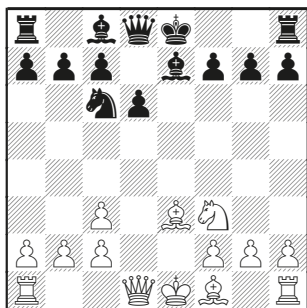
Kashlinskaya started with 5.5/6 and a strong start is always a guarantee of a good tie-break. Here's an example of one of those early wins against Spain's best player.

Sabrina Vega Gutierrez – Alina Kashlinskaya

20th ch-EUR Indiv w 2019 Antalya TUR (3.7)

1.e4 e5 Kashlinskaya is married to Wojtaszek, an elite player and a former second of Anand, so she usually plays mainstream theory openings. In this tournament she played 1 e4 e5 with the Petroff (in this game) and Berlin as her choices.

2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♖xe5 d6 4.♘f3 ♖xe4 5.♗c3 ♗xc3 6.dxc3 ♗e7 7.♗e3 ♗c6



This is an interesting choice, not because of the move, but because of fashion. It used to be the preferred choice by the elite until Caruana's loss to Karjakin at the Berlin Candidates last year. Then first Caruana (who is the main proponent of the Petroff) and then everybody else switched to 7...0-0 and Caruana even employed it in his match with Carlsen, drawing without problems. And since Kashlinskaya was undoubtedly helped by her husband, it is curious to see the return of this move

8.♞d2 ♗e6 9.0-0-0 ♞d7 10.a3 This was also Karjakin's choice in that game, while already this year Caruana played 10 h4 against Harikrishna in their match in Saint Louis.

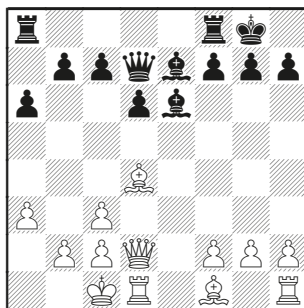
10...a6!? This is the alternative to 10...h6 and has already played by strong players like Duda and Li Chao.

10...h6 was played by Caruana, but after 11.♗d4 ♗xd4 12.♗xd4 ♖g8 13.♗e2

White had an annoying initiative that Caruana couldn't tame. 1-0 (48) Karjakin,S (2763)-Caruana,F (2784) Berlin 2018.

11.♗d4 This is a common idea in this line of the Petroff, but now we get to see the idea behind 10...a6 - Black hasn't weakened her kingside so she can castle kingside (which is unusual for the 9...♞d7 line) and start her own attack on the queenside. It was better for White to wait with this move and play 11 h4 or 11 ♖b1.

11...♗xd4 12.♗xd4 0-0!



The engine gives Black an advantage here since her queenside pawns can get in contact with White's much faster, all this because Black avoided the move ...h6 on the kingside.

13.♖g1? White still hopes to attack with pawns, but this is a waste of time as the pawns can never reach the point of contact. Therefore it was better to play with pieces.

13.♞f4!? this prevents Black's ...c5 in view of the pin along the d-file, so it is not that easy for Black to advance on the queenside. 13...♞fe8 14.♗d3 ♖ad8 with unclear play even though the engine still prefers Black.

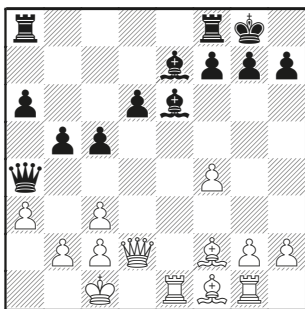
13...♞a4 13...♞fc8 is the engine's curious suggestion with the direct threat of ...c5. 14.g4 c5 15.♗e5 ♗d8 16.♞e3 ♗f8 with unclear play where the engine favours Black again.

14.f4 c5 15.♗f2 15.♗e3 was better. For the reason see the note to White's 16th, with the comment on 18...a5.



From winning the first women prize in Isle of Man tournament, to European Champion in just six months: Alina Kashlinskaya

15...b5 16.♖e1?



16.g4 this prevents ...♗f6 in view of g5, but White had to see that after 16...b4 17.cxb4 ♖ab8 she had the very important resource 18.♗e2!, attacking the pawn on a6 and forcing the exchange of queens 18...cxb4 (18...a5 19.b5 closes the b-file even though it drops the f4-pawn (hence it was better to put the bishop on e3 on move15!) 19...♗xf4+ 20.♗e3 and White isn't worse.) 19.♗xa6 ♗xa6 20.♗xa6 bxa3 21.bxa3 ♖a8 22.♗d3 ♖xa3 with equality.

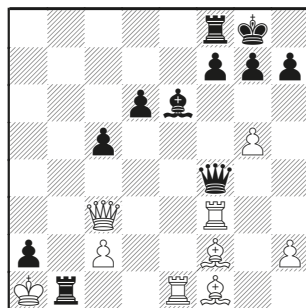
16...♗f6 It was possible to play 16...b4 immediately, but Kashlinskaya takes the time allowed by White's last to improve her position to the maximum.

17.g4 b4 18.cxb4 ♖ab8! All Black's pieces are included in the attack and she is already winning. A rare sight of Black having a crushing attack in the Petroff on move 18!

19.b5 axb5 20.g5 ♗xb2+! 21.♗xb2 b4 Opening up the files against White's king.

22.♖g3 bxa3+ 23.♗a1 a2 Threatening ...♖b1.

24.♗c3 ♗xf4 25.♖f3 ♖b1+



After the exchange on b1 the other rook joins the attack from b8 with mate or huge material losses to follow shortly. And who said the Petroff was boring?

0-1

The tournament was very exciting. It had several players emerging on top at various points. The French **Pauline Guichard** started with 4.5/5 and was leading the tournament before losing two in a row against Kashlinskaya and Tsolakidou. To her credit, she then won two in a row and with draws in the final two rounds she shared 6th place with 7.5/11. After beating Guichard, Kashlinskaya remained in the lead for a few more rounds but then lost to Inna Gaponenko in Round 9 and that made the Ukrainian player the leader.

However, then a come-back hero came to the fore - former World and European Champion **Antoaneta Stefanova**, who started with 3/6, then began winning and won her last 5(!) games, including the last round win over Gaponenko. This meant that 5 players shared 1st place - Kashlinskaya, Sebag, Paehtz (these two had a solid and controlled tournament, confirming their class), Gaponenko and Stefanova. As usual with a tie-break the good start of Kashlinskaya proved decisive. Sebag took silver and Paehtz bronze.

This tournament was also a qualification event for the World Cup 2020 and there were quite a few young players who made it - on 7.5/11 and shared 6th place are 19-year old Stavroula Tsolakidou from Greece (a triple World Champion for Girls: U14 in 2013, U16 in 2015 and U18 in 2016), who had a solid tournament

Pauline Guichard started with 4.5/5 but struggled in the middle. She shared 6th place with 7.5/11



without a loss, and 23-year old Ulviyya Fataliyeva from Azerbaijan. On 7/11 and sharing 15th place are 21-year-old Anastasya Paramzina from Russia, 24-year-old Marina Brunello from Italy and 16-year-old Nurgul Salimova from Bulgaria, all qualifying from the players on the huge share of 15th place.

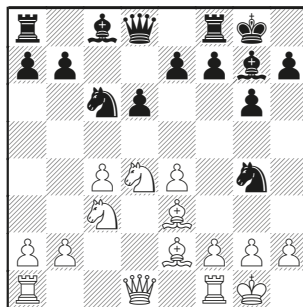
In a qualification event it is inevitable that nerves will play a crucial role. When players cannot control their nerves things like this can easily happen:

Pia Cramling – Ana Matnadze

20th ch-EUR Indiv w 2019 Antalya TUR (3.10)

1.c4 ♖f6 2.♘c3 c5 3.♘f3 ♘c6 4.d4 cxd4 5.♗xd4 g6 6.e4 d6 7.♙e2 ♙g7 8.♙e3 0-0 9.0-0 A tabiya in the Maroczy Bind. What follows next is rather shocking from an experienced and strong player as IM Ana Matnadze.

9...♗g4??



This loses a piece and has been known for ages.

9...♗xd4 10.♙xd4 ♙d7 is the most common way of playing this position as Black, but lately the following plan has been causing the black players some headaches: 11.h3!? ♙c6 12.♙c2 a5 13.♗ad1; this is all very concrete, as White's idea is to push e5 or c5, using the opposition of the rook on d1 and the queen on d8 and saddling Black with a weak pawn on d6 13...♗d7 14.♙xg7 ♙xg7, It appears that Black has achieved the Maroczy dream of exchanging the dark-squared bishops, but after 15.♙g4! we see White's point - she wants to take on d7 and



Sometimes even professional players make silly mistakes: Pia Cramling

push e5 or c5 and if the knight moves then e5 (or c5) come. Black is already struggling here.

10. ♖xg4 ♖xg4 10... ♗xd4 11. ♕xc8 White is a piece up.

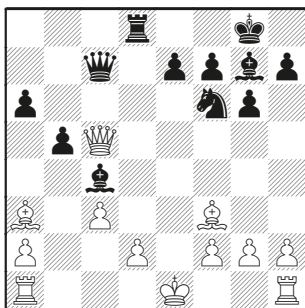
11. ♗xc6 ♖xd1 12. ♗xd8 ♖g4 13. ♗xb7 And White won without problems.

1-0

A curious incident happened in the game Gevorgyan-Cornette.

Maria Gevorgyan - Deimante Cornette

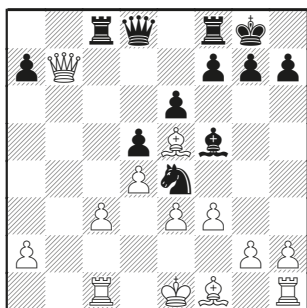
20th ch-EUR Indiv w 2019 Antalya TUR (3.27)





Former World and European Champion Antoaneta Stefanova

12...♖c8 13.♙xb7 ♘e4 14.f3



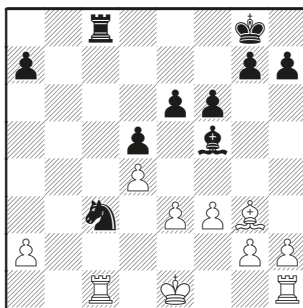
14...♘xc3? Black fails to remember the theory, or rather her improvement on the previous known game.

14...♙h4+ is the only move: 15.g3 ♙h6 16.♙f4 g5 17.♙c7 g4. Black has excellent counterplay here: 18.♙f4 ♘g5 19.fxg4 ♙e4 20.h4 ♙xh1 21.♙e2 f6 22.hxg5 fxg5 23.♙d6. So far we have followed the game 1-0 (52) Gajewski, G (2588)-Matlakov, M (2707) Batumi 2018 and here the improvement is to put the other rook on d8 23...♖fd8! and in this unclear position Black is not worse.

15.♙a6! Now Black is under severe pressure. 15...f6? But after this mistake it is over as there is no compensation for the loss of material.

15...♙a5 was the only move to stay in the game. 16.0-0 ♙xa2 17.♙d6 ♖fe8 18.♙h1! emphasises the passivity of Black's position, though she's not lost yet.

16.♙xc8 ♙xc8 17.♙xc8 ♖xc8 18.♙g3



White is a clear exchange up and the rest is elementary.

18...♖c4 19.♙d2 ♘a4 20.♖xc4 dxc4 21.e4 ♙g6 22.♖b1

1-0

With Artemiev's win in Skopje and Kashlinskaya's win in Antalya the current European individual champions are Russians. I suppose that is business as usual.

INTERVIEW:**JOVANKA HOUSKA ON BEING A
WOMAN CHESS-PLAYER IN BRITAIN****ONE MALE ENGLISH GM TOLD ME:
'OH, IS THAT YOUR RATING?
GOOD, YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN A KNIGHT AND BISHOP!'**

By Milan Dinic

This issue of BCM is dedicated to the topic of women in chess. Bearing this in mind, the editorial team considered it essential to hear from a British woman player about her experiences and challenges in the chess world.

Jovanka (Jovi) Houska is one of the best female chess players Britain has ever had. An International Master and a Woman Grand Master, Houska (ELO 2426) has won the British Women's Chess Championship eight times, a success previously achieved only by Jana Bellin (who shares Czech roots with Houska) in the 1970s. Aside from writing chess books, she has also co-authored a well-received romance novel 'The Mating Game', about a woman's romantic adventure in the chess world.

In an interview for BCM, Houska talks in detail about the numerous challenges and many unpleasant, unkind and even hostile situations and comments she had to go through in her career. We hope that the British chess community takes Houska's remarks seriously, for they are valid and important for improving the status of women players and of British chess overall.

British Chess Magazine: How would you assess the status women have in chess today?

Jovanka Houska: It depends on where you're from. It's ironic but, in the Western world, we don't have a high status. In other, non-western countries, women are doing very well. In countries like China, Georgia, Russia... women's chess has a very high status and a lot of support and coverage.

BCM: Why do you think this is the case?

J.H: To a certain degree, it's a consequence of the fact that chess has a much higher status in those countries than in the West. But there is also a degree of resentment towards women in the West when it comes to chess, with the argument - 'your play is of a lower standard, so why should you deserve more attention and support'.

BCM: And do you think that women's chess is of a better or lower standard compared to men's chess, or about the same?

J.H: At the moment we don't have the same high ratings as men, but I think that has to do with low participation levels of women in chess tournaments. Again, look at a country like Georgia where they had a lot of women in the top 25. This all has to do with participation levels and increasing the number of women coaches. But women are weaker than men, for now.

BCM: When do you see that changing?

J.H: Probably not in the next ten years. That will change with higher participation rates. It's a bit of a vicious circle. In order to progress in chess, you have to work in a group. It's very difficult if you're a sole woman in a group.

BCM: One of the questions regarding women's chess is whether it's a good or a bad idea to have women-only events. Judit Polgar, for example, always participated in open events which include men, and she thinks that's the best way to progress. What do you think?

J.H: I think there should be a combination of mixed and women-only events. You need women-only events just for the social network so girls could establish friendships and have study partners.

Judit's case is different. She had different circumstances. For example, she has two sisters who she trained with and a lot of women don't have that female social network in chess. If you're a sole girl playing chess, it's boring!

BCM: How is it boring?

J.H: You play your game regardless of the result, and what happens after the game? Boys/men socialise, go out, spend time together. For a girl that's not easy and it's not fun. If you're a girl, you also get some inappropriate comments from boys/men. Girls like to relate to other girls - you see that in school. Secondly, in an atmosphere where there are not that many girls in tournaments, they themselves become competitors and are not allowed to become friends.

BCM: How was your experience growing up as a woman chess-player in Britain?

J.H: I learnt chess thanks to my father who was very patient since I was not a natural chess-player but react very instinctively. Luckily, chess had a big presence in my family, so I had a social network inside when it comes to chess. However, in my late teens, 18-19, I felt hostility and even thought of giving chess up. Some men told me things such as 'I don't know how you have this rating when you know nothing'. One male English GM told me: 'Oh, is that your rating? Good, you know the difference between a knight and bishop!' These are the types of comments I was exposed to.

I was naturally quite confident and I believed in myself, but there were male players who didn't like this and they would try to break me down. Everyone felt invited to give advice about my play. There were also comments about my appearance.

On the biological and psychological differences between men and women:

WOMEN DON'T HAVE THE SAME ENDURANCE AND MEMORY AS MEN

BCM: *Do you think there is a difference between the way men and women think, not just when it comes to chess?*

J.H: The first difference is in the endurance. Chess is also an endurance sport. Men have the energy to put in seven hours of serious focus and concentration. Furthermore, other women have mentioned to me that they have difficulties in remembering the opening lines, and I have the same problem. The men on the other hand don't have that problem and can remember lines of opening theory. I think there are some differences in these things.

Furthermore, chess is taught in a very male-dominant and competitive nature, something which, I think, is not close to a woman's approach. Both of my sisters used to be chess players, and both gave up. They said to me that it was very introverted and that there isn't enough dialogue as there is in other board games.

There are also biological issues women have to deal with, such as pregnancies, periods or the influence of hormones. These issues are addressed in other sports, but not in chess.

BCM: *How should that be acknowledged, resolved?*

J.H: In terms of pregnancy and child-care, I think that there should be child-care facilities at the Olympiads. When it comes to other biological issues, there should be more acknowledgment of the subject. At the minute we don't have a discussion about this in chess, and we need it.

What turned things around for me was meeting my old Serbian player [GM Dusan Pavlovic - note BCM] who respected my chess and my play. Thanks to him I got to see the other side of things - that GMs are supportive, which is not the case in the West. Recently, I have been reading a biography of Vera Menchik and you could see a pattern there: Aleksander Alekhine saying that Vera was a great and talented player and on the other hand there was Stuart Milner-Barry says he doesn't know why she's so strong as he beat her 9:0.

BCM: *You mentioned some of the negative comments you were exposed to. In what circumstances were they made – were they private or public?*

J.H: It would never happen in a public function, but in a casual social environment, where there are other people watching, such as breakfast or similar. You would leave the table feeling a little bit humiliated.

BCM: *And do you think things are changing for the better now when it comes to women?*

J.H: We have Chris Fegan [the English Chess Federation Director of Women's chess - note, BCM], who is very supportive and whom I feel I could talk openly to. He has been very positive and has helped increase the prize money for women's chess and I'm hopeful. Now I feel there will always be a women's team, which was up until recently quite uncertain.

Things are improving - I've just heard that the Grand Prix on the Isle of Man will have 18-20 places for women. That's a fantastic opportunity! But, we need more women in chess organisations. Also, women are more encouraged as chess authors, and my cooperation with Forward Chess is a good example.

BCM: *Do you think it would be a good or a bad thing if women quotas were introduced in tournaments?*

J.H: Affirmative action is a great thing as long as it's done with good intentions and a good plan and not just out of pure tokenism



WHY ARE WOMEN BETTER AT MEMORY SPORTS THAN MEN, BUT (STILL) NOT AT CHESS?

By GM Ray Keene OBE*

There is little doubt that, in physical sports, men will tend to out-perform women. Upper bodily strength plays a major role, ensuring that contests between respectively leading male and female practitioners in tennis, boxing and rugby, for example, will inevitably end in favour of the men. However, should the same apply in mental sport, where physical strength is irrelevant?

The late Tony Buzan, the inventor of Mind Maps, who sadly died prematurely of a heart attack last month, maintained that there was virtually no difference between male and female brainpower. This is a controversial area, and our brand-new Fide Vice-President, Grandmaster Nigel Short MBE, once got into hot water by dipping his toe into this particular controversy.

I co-founded the world memory championships with Tony in London 1991, in fact - at The Athenaeum Club which has an important place in the history of British chess. For the first few years, white male competitors dominated proceedings, with particular success brought achieved by Dominic O'Brien, who won the world championship on no fewer than eight occasions. However, in the past two world memory championships there has been a startling upheaval. The supreme grand champion in 2017 at Guangzhou was an 18-year-old Mongolian teenager Munkshur Narmandakh, and then a year later the new grand champion, crushing all the men, was an even more sensational 14-year-old schoolgirl from China, Wei Qinru.

As an indication of the feats performed by memory champions, one of the most remarkable achievements has been to correctly memorise the order of a single shuffled pack of cards in about twelve seconds! This has dropped dramatically from the two and a half minutes notched up by Dominic O'Brien, when he first won the memory championship in 1991.

Chess might be considered the mental sport par excellence, so why is it, despite the undoubted brilliance of Judit Polgar, that no female player has come close to winning the world chess championship? At the annual Gibraltar international a special effort is made by chief organiser Brian Callaghan OBE to encourage women's chess. Nevertheless, although striking individual victories are achieved by female grandmasters, the overall leading places tend to be taken by men.

So how do we interpret the dichotomy between memory sport and chess in terms of the female breakthrough?

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My solution is that chess is an entrenched activity, with centuries of historic and social male dominance. On the other hand, memory sport represents a relatively new type of mental combat, where there is no great tradition of male superiority. Given social carte blanche and a level playing field, it therefore seems to me that a parallel female breakthrough will eventually occur with chess.

The game I have chosen to accompany this article was won by one of the brighter stars in the female British chess firmament, Natasha Regan.

Natasha has distinguished herself by co-writing two books with GM Matthew Sadler, the second of which, *Game Changer*, records the alarming progress of the AlphaZero chess program, devised by that British AI genius, Demis Hassabis CBE. Is it too fanciful to detect the influence of AZ in Natasha's conduct of the black pieces?

Please see below for Natasha's win against ECF President Dominic Lawson. I am grateful to Natasha for sending me some notes, for which she generously acknowledges the help of GM Matthew Sadler. It was almost the crucial game in the crucial match RAC vs MCC. As it was, MCC won the match 4.5-3.5 to win the Hamilton Russell Cup. This game was played on Board 4. Time limit an hour for each player for all moves (no increment).

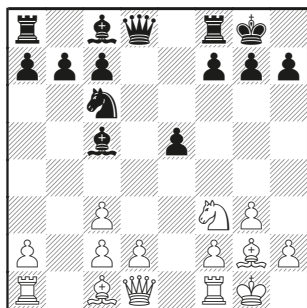
DOMINIC LAWSON VS NATASHA REGAN

26th March 2019

A swashbuckling struggle typical of the play in the Hamilton-Russell Cup!

Here the counterattacker wins the day!

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 ♖c5 4. g3 ♗f6
5.♖g2 d5 6.exd5 ♗xd5 7.O-O ♗xc3
8.bxc3 O-O

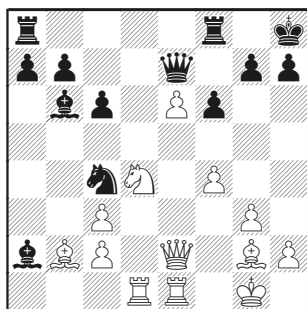


The battle lines are drawn: Black has open lines and free development for her pieces, White will try to prove that the e5-pawn is a target rather than a strength.

9.♖e1 f6 10.♞b1 ♖b6 11.♗e2 ♗h8 12.♖b2
♖f5 13.d4 ♖e6 Black encourages dxe5 from
White as this opens the line of the bishop on
b6 against the White f2-pawn. However, the
pawn grab Black envisages is extremely risky.

14.♞bd1 ♖xa2 15.dxe5 ♗e7 16.e6 ♗e5
Tempting White to play 17.♗xe5 when 17...
fxe5 combines against the f2 pawn.

17.♗d4 c6 18.f4 ♗c4



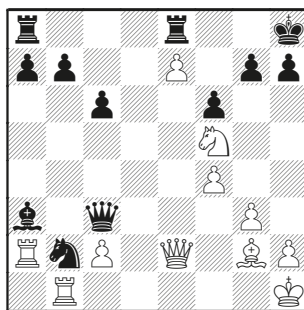
The position is very fraught: Black's pieces are perilously-placed but it is not easy for White to keep control of the position in the presence of so many pins and counterattacks!

19.♞a1 ♗xb2 20.♞xa2 ♗c5 More tricks, defending the knight on b2 indirectly due to the threat of ... ♗xc3.

21.♗h1 ♗xc3 22.♗f5 ♗fe8 23.e7 ♖c5
24.♞b1 ♖a3 White has navigated the complications well so far, but now with time short these start to take their toll.

25.♞bxb2 25.♗e6 ♗xc2 26.♖e4 was the best way for White to keep control. White's sacrifice in the game leads to a complete turnaround.

25...♖xb2 26.♗d6 ♖a3



An unexpected and very strong defensive move: the bishop attacks both the knight on d6 and the e7-pawn beyond it.

27.♗f7+ ♗g8 28. ♖xa3 28.♗e6 ♗xe7
wins for Black thanks to that wonderful defensive piece, the bishop on a3, which defends the rook on e7. White sacrifices desperately but to no avail.

28... ♗xa3 29.♗h6+ gxh6 30.♗e6+ ♗g7
31.♗g4+ ♗f7 32.♖f1 ♗xe7 33.♗g7+
♗d6 34.♗xf6+ ♗c7 35.♗f7+ ♗e7

0-1

To find out more about the World memory championship, visit the following link:
www.worldmemorychampionships.com

THE BEST (AND WORST) COUNTRIES TO BE A FEMALE CHESS PLAYER



Photo: Shutterstock

By GM David Smerdon*

Here's a quiz for you. Try to guess which of these countries have the highest percentage of female chess players:

- Brazil, China, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Mexico, Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden, United Kingdom, USA, Vietnam

We'll get to the answer soon, but it's an indisputable fact that chess is a man's game - at least statistically. All players know only too well the feeling of walking into a club to see twenty or even more men for every woman. It's not even that uncommon to play a tournament with no females at all. How can such a 'fair' sport that purports to provide a level playing field for people of all colours, races, ages and genders end up with so few of the fairer sex?

One of the most common questions that a chess player might hear from non-players is "Why are there women-only tournaments?" This is just one of the ideas chess organisers have come up with to address female participation; another is having special female titles, such as 'Women's Grand Master', which has lower standards than the male ('Open') equivalent. Special female prizes are regular features in tournaments, though this measure can occasionally still not be enough. At the end of a recent State championship in Australia, where the highest-performing female is usually awarded the State women's title, the organisers faced a dilemma as to what to do with the sole female participant. The young girl had put in a fabulous performance, but ultimately did not get the title on account of not having any female competitors.

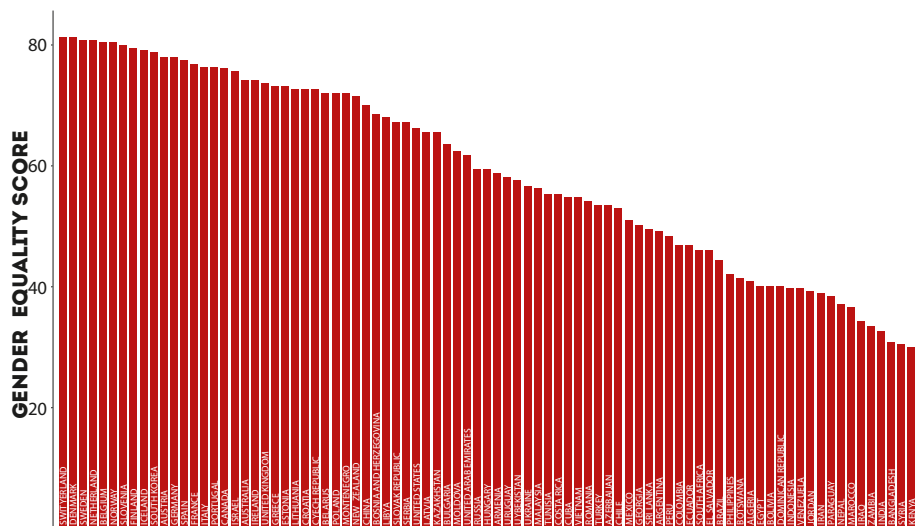
You are probably not surprised to hear that female participation rates differ across the world. After all, some cultures value girls differently to boys. Some countries may be more supportive of women playing competitive games against men. In more conservative countries, a girl might be encouraged to get married and stay at home with the kids, rather than play rated tournaments. In poorer countries, a family might not be able to afford to send all of the children to chess lessons, and so the girls might miss out.

These are all intuitive stories. And indeed, female participation rates do vary significantly, and predictably, across the world. But not in the way you might expect. Going back to the countries in the quiz at the beginning, I suspect most people would arrange them in roughly the same order as their level of gender equality. The [United Nations Development Programme](#) releases a ranking of gender equality every year, and using the latest figures, those 16 countries are ranked like this:

1.	Denmark	9.	Vietnam
2.	Sweden	10.	Mexico
3.	Netherlands	11.	South Africa
4.	Germany	12.	Brazil
5.	France	13.	Indonesia
6.	United Kingdom	14.	Iran
7.	China	15.	India
8.	USA	16.	Kenya

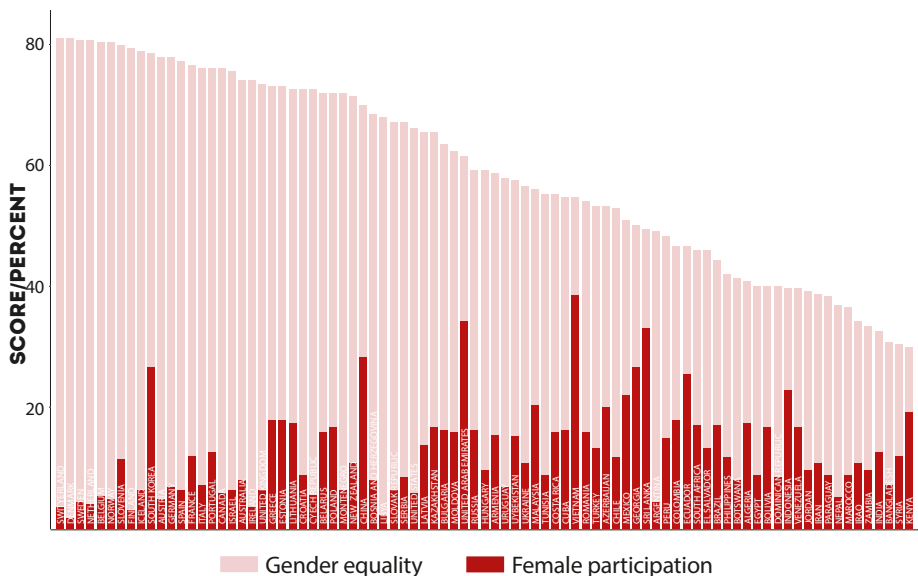
Seems logical enough, right? Here's a graph of many more countries, ranked by the UN's gender equality index:

GENDER EQUALITY



You can see the usual suspects at the top end of the scale: Switzerland, the Netherlands, and all of Scandinavia, as well as most of western Europe. At the other end we mainly find developing countries or other nations in the Middle East and the subcontinent. I've dropped countries with a very small number of Fide-rated chess players, because I want to compare this to gender participation rates. If the intuition above holds, then we would expect to see similarly downward-sloping bars when we add in the female participation rates: Higher rates in Scandinavian countries than in typically patriarchal Islamic nations, for example. So let's see. Thanks to some data from the indefatigable Jeff Sonas, I was able to match up a country's proportion of females among active, Fide-rated chess players against its gender equality score. The data below covers 1999-2015, but I also checked against a recent sample from November 2018 and the pattern is the same. Remember, for the stories above to be true, we're expecting the the bars to get lower as we move from left to right. Here's the actual result:

FEMALE PARTICIPATION



Surprisingly, it doesn't look that way at all! In fact, if anything, the rates get higher as we move down the equality scale (we can show statistically that this is true). As expected, women are the minority in every country. But there's still quite a lot of variation in rates. Denmark is the **worst** country in our list of participation, with only one female player to roughly 50 males, while the rest of Scandinavia as well as most of western Europe also languish at the bottom.

On the other hand, some of the best countries show evidence of the effect of female role models, and would be no surprise to players familiar with women's chess history. Georgia (ranked 5th) and China (ranked 4th) both featured multiple women's World Champions. There are also some high rates from a few unexpected sources: Vietnam (1st), the United Arab Emirates (2nd), Indonesia (8th), and even Kenya (12th) really buck the

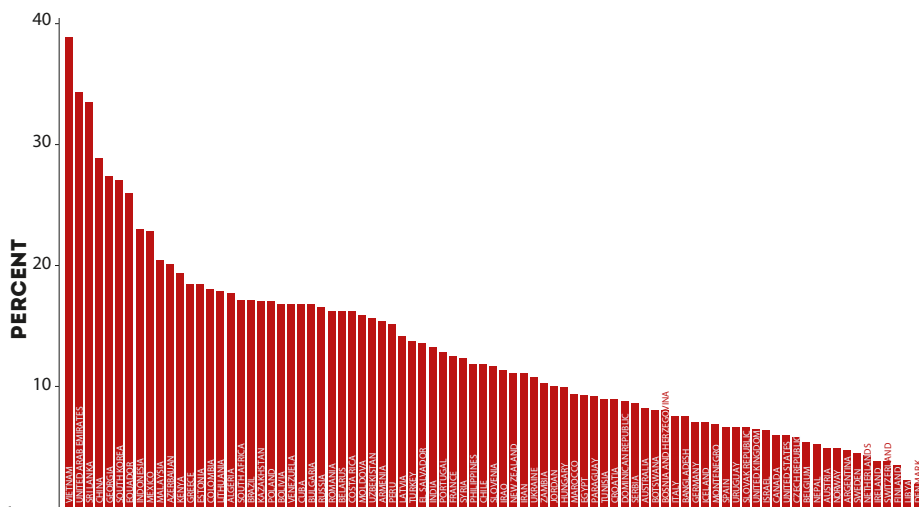
trend. Interestingly, a lot of the best countries for female chess players are in Asia. Besides Vietnam, there are five other countries in the best ten, and if I am a little more lenient with the chess population cut-offs, Mongolia and Tajikistan would also be in there.

Here are those 16 countries we mentioned earlier, but this time also ranked in order of female participation, and where I've highlighted the top and bottom halves by gender equality:

1.	Denmark	1.	Vietnam
2.	Sweden	2.	China
3.	Netherlands	3.	Indonesia
4.	Germany	4.	Mexico
5.	France	5.	Kenya
6.	United Kingdom	6.	South Africa
7.	China	7.	Brazil
8.	USA	8.	India
9.	Vietnam	9.	France
10.	Mexico	10.	Iran
11.	South Africa	11.	Germany
12.	Brazil	12.	United Kingdom
13.	Indonesia	13.	USA
14.	Iran	14.	Sweden
15.	India	15.	Netherlands
16.	Kenya	16.	Denmark

And here's the complete sample of countries ranked in order of their female chess ratios:

FEMALE PARTICIPATION



So, the more gender-equal a country is, the fewer females want to play chess? What does it all mean?

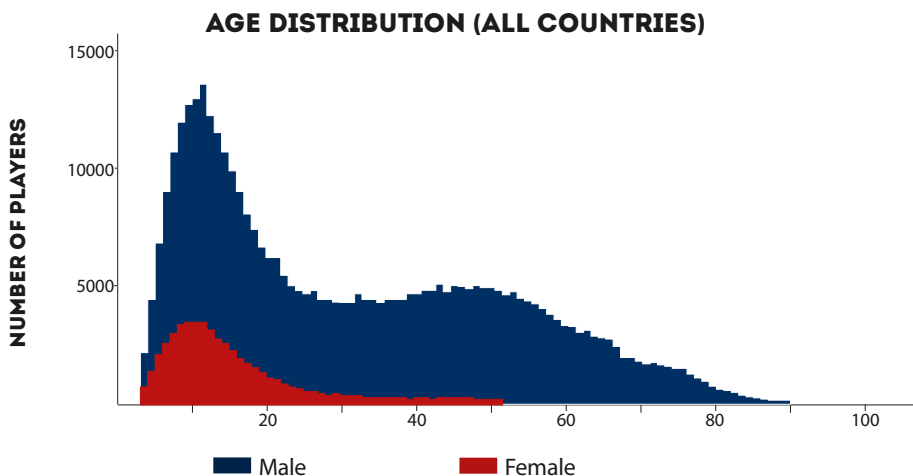
There are a number of possible explanations, for which we can look to the broader research on gender. A recent, slightly controversial, school of thought fits with the chess results. Last year, a paper in *Psychological Science* discussed the so-called gender-equality paradox in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education. They found that while girls perform better than boys in STEM subjects at school, many more capable girls decide not to pursue STEM career than boys - and this gap is much larger in more gender-equal countries.

Then a few months later, a paper in *Science*, using data from 80,000 individuals in 76 countries, found that the more that women have equal opportunities, the more they differ from men in their **preferences**. The story goes along the lines that if women somehow biologically prefer NOT to compete with men, then they will be most able to show this in countries where women have more freedom to choose.

Could it be that, deep down, women just don't like chess as much as men?

Well, we can't rule it out, but I doubt it. There are a lot of other parts to this story. For example, a different explanation is that women are more likely to play chess in gender-unequal countries because it's one of the few fields where they **can** actually compete with men, and be sure that the result is judged without discrimination (as opposed to, say, promotions in the workplace). This story is plausible and I think worth investigating, though I haven't worked out how to do it without more data.

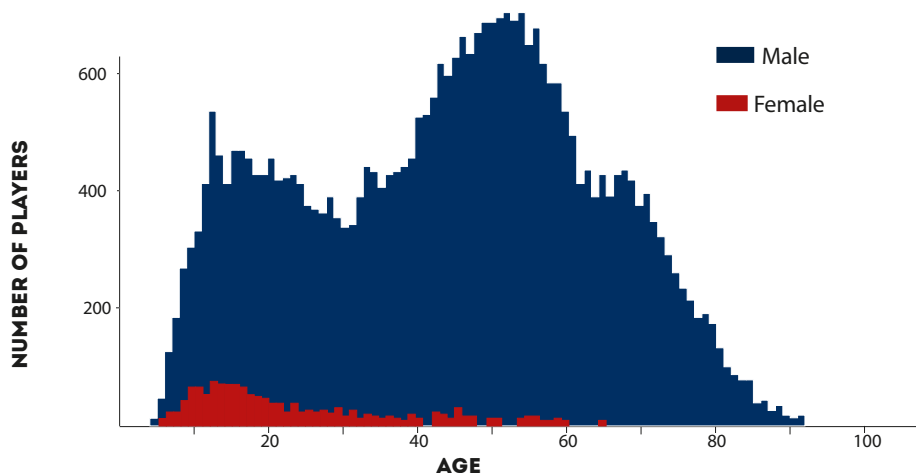
Another alternative explanation that we CAN check is that our results are accidentally picking up the trend of worldwide increased female participation over recent decades. If countries with higher female participation are newer to international chess and therefore have younger chess communities, they will more likely reflect this trend. Here is a sample of the age distribution of male and female players across all countries:



We can immediately notice a few obvious features: there are more males than females at all ages, most people start playing when they're young, and players of both genders start to drop out after primary school. There's also an interesting point that many men come back to the game around their 40's; this could be related to the period when a father's kids become independent, but also might have to do with the surge in popularity due to the 1972 Fischer-Spassky world championship match. However, there's no such resurgence among women, so the 'Fischer effect' seems unlikely.

Let's check the graph for the countries with the lowest female participation rates:

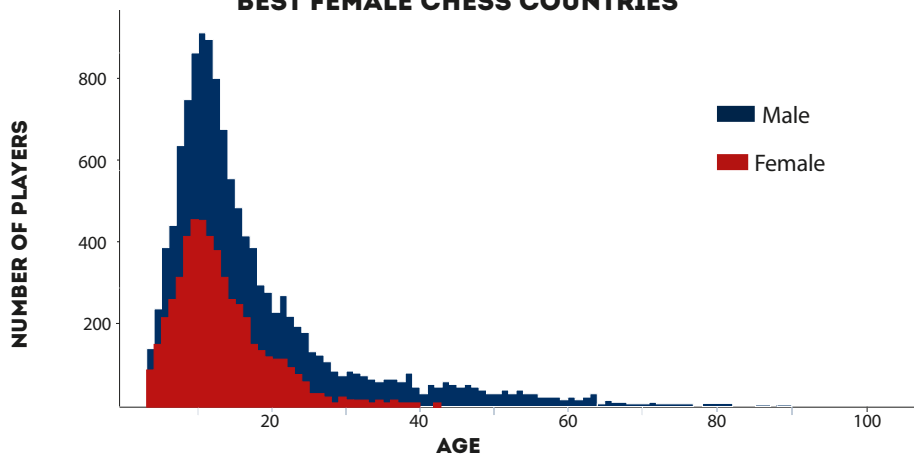
WORST FEMALE CHESS COUNTRIES



The female graph looks predictably abysmal and the gender gap is massive even before the age of 10. The male graph also has a curious feature: the peak is actually around 50. There are a lot more older men in these countries.

But when we turn to the countries with the highest female participation rates...

BEST FEMALE CHESS COUNTRIES



...the picture is completely different. These are indeed 'young' chess countries. Strikingly, girls make up a sizeable share from a young age and maintain it until their early 20's, after which the ratio drops sharply. This could be due to marital/childbearing pressures in these countries, but it could also be because chess organisations rarely focus on targeted female infrastructure after the junior years.

These results suggest that the age distribution of a country's chess community plays a big role. The best countries for female players are those where there are a high share of girls playing from a young age. This could be because federations or school chess organisations make it a priority to focus on teaching chess to both genders. At the London Chess Classic last year, I asked the federation president of Mongolia (where females make up over a third of all rated players) the secret to their success. He told me that the federation has a clear goal to teach chess to every child, no matter what age, social background or gender. The focus on teaching girls when they're young coincides with another strain of gender research, which argues that girls are 'nurtured' from a young age to believe they can't (or shouldn't) compete with boys.

Still, even among the top-ranked countries, there is the same exodus from the chess world of young adult women. Perhaps this is a neglected group in chess policies. There is often easily accessible infrastructure to play chess while in school, such as girls' clubs and a higher frequency of female-only junior events. But after the age of twenty or so, it becomes decidedly more difficult for the average female club player to enjoy the game among other women. I don't know what sort of policies might address this - promoting young women's clubs, or perhaps introducing female quotas into more team events, as has been shown to be effective in recent research from French league data.

On the other hand, the effect of female chess role models is also an area to explore, while Asian countries seem to making the biggest headway towards encouraging women to play chess. Perhaps there's a cultural element, or perhaps their chess federation policies are different - I don't know, but it is definitely worth finding out. What's clear from the data is that girls in all countries around the world are still leaving the chess world after school, and they're unlikely to come back. We should encourage them to stay.

*** David Smerdon in an Australian Grandmaster and an economist focussing on behavioural economics, microeconomics and development**

The article originally appeared on <http://davidsmeldon.com>

GASHIMOV MEMORIAL SHAMKIR

GREAT PERFORMANCE

BY **MAGNUS CARLSEN**

By IM Shaun Taulbut



Photo: Gashimov memorial official

This tournament was notable for the outstanding performance of Magnus Carlsen who won with 7/9 - two points ahead of Sergey Karjakin and Ding Liren.

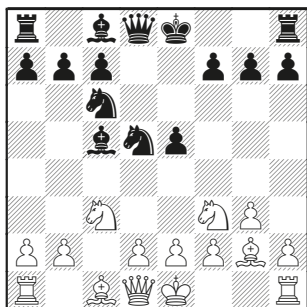
He proved why he is at the top. Not only did he finish the tournament two points ahead of the first runner-up, but he had some great games. Here are two examples.

Magnus Carlsen beat Giri with an enterprising pawn sacrifice after a quiet English opening.

Magnus Carlsen – Anish Giri

Vugar Gashimov Mem 2019 Shamkir AZE (7.3)

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘f6 3.♗f3 ♘c6 4.g3 d5 5.cxd5 ♗xd5 6.♗g2 ♗c5



This active move allows White a number of options.

7.0-0 White could play the combinative 7.♗xe5 ♗xc3 8.♗xc6+ bxc6 9.dxc3 ♖xd1+ 10.♗xd1 ♗xf2 11.♖f1 ♗c5 12.♖xf7 ♗d6 13.♖f3 ♗xe5 14.♖e3 0-0 15.♖xe5 ♖f2 16.h4 ♗g4 17.♗c2 with a slight advantage.

7...0-0 8.d3 8.♗xe5 ♗xc3 9.bxc3 ♗xe5 10.d4 ♗d6 11.dxe5 ♗xe5 is almost equal so Carlsen is not tempted by this.

8...h6 A useful move, stopping White coming to g5 with a piece at some point; 8...♗g4 9.♗xe5 (9.♗g5 ♗xc3 10.bxc3 ♗e7 11.♗e4 with a slight advantage for White) 9...♗xc3 10.bxc3 ♗xe5 11.d4 ♗d6 12.dxe5 ♗xe5 13.♗a3 ♖xd1 14.♖fxd1 ♖fd8 is equal.

9.♗xd5 ♖xd5 10.a3 White plays to expand on the queenside with b4 if allowed.

10...a5 Black prevents b4: a sensible plan.

11.♗d2 ♖e6 12.♖c1 12.b4 axb4 13.axb4 ♖xa1 14.♖xa1 ♗xb4 15.♗xb4 ♗xb4 16.♖a5 ♖e7 17.♗xe5 c5 is almost equal so Carlsen prefers to keep the tension.

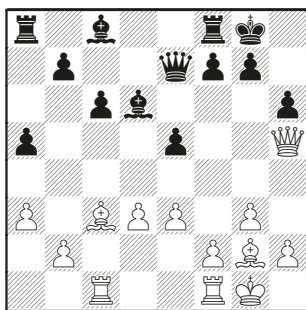
12...♖e7 13.♗c3 ♗d4 Not the best: 13...♖e8 14.♗xe5 ♗xe5 15.d4 ♗d6 16.dxe5 ♗xe5 17.♖c2 c6 18.e4 with a

slight edge for White; 13...a4 14.♖c2 ♘b6 is also worth consideration.

14.e3 ♘xf3+ 15.♖xf3 Now White has a better position because of his more active pieces and the Black queen's bishop has yet to emerge.

15...♘d6 16.♖h5 White eyes the kingside, using his advantage in development.

16...c6



After 16...♖g5 17.♖xg5 hxg5 18.d4 exd4 19.♘xd4 White has the edge.

17.f4 White opens up the position; a rapid change of pace which may have come as a surprise to Black.

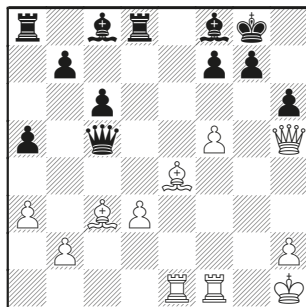
17...exf4 18.gxf4 White goes for a sacrificial attack, opening up the g-file. 18.exf4 is good but does not pose as many problems for Black.

18...♖xe3+ 19.♙h1 ♔d8 20.♖ce1 All the white pieces are in play and Black must defend carefully.

20...♖c5 Not the best. Black can play 20...♖xd3 when he may have feared 21.♘xg7 when if 21...♙xg7 (Possible is 21...♖g6 22.♖h4 ♘f5 23.♘h6 ♖g4 when 24.♖f2 ♖g6 is adequate) 22.♖g1 ♖d4 23.♘d5+ mates.

21.f5 The white f-pawn ties Black down and cuts off the queen from defending.

21...♘f8 22.♘e4



The open g-file beckons and White is well on top.

22...♔d5 Black offers the exchange to try and stem the attack.

23.♖f3 23.♖e2 b5 24.♖g2 ♖a7 25.♖xh6 f6 26.♖fg1 is decisive, as is the game continuation.

23...b5 24.♖g1 ♖a7 25.♘f6 Winning was 25.♖fg3 ♘xf5 (25...g6 26.♖xg6+ fxc6 27.♖xg6+ ♘g7 28.♘xg7 ♖xg1+ 29.♖xg1 ♖xg7 30.♘xd5+ cxd5 31.♖c5 ♘b7 32.d4 is winning; 25...f6 26.♖xh6 ♘xf5 27.♖xf6 ♘xe4+ 28.dxe4 ♖dd7 29.♖e6+ ♖f7 30.♘xg7 ♖xg1+ 31.♖xg1 ♘xg7 32.♖xc6 b4 33.a4 winning) 26.♖xg7+ ♘xg7 27.♖xg7+ ♙f8 28.♖xh6 ♘xe4+ 29.dxe4.

25...g6 26.♖h3 ♔d6 27.♖h4 ♖xf6 28.♖xf6 ♘e7 29.♖xc6 ♖xc6 30.♘xc6 ♙g7 31.fxc6 fxc6 32.d4 a4 33.d5 b4 34.♘e8 ♘g5 If 34...g5 35.♖f7+ ♙g8 36.♖e1 ♘c5 37.axb4 ♘xb4 38.♖xa7 ♘xe1 39.d6 ♘f2 40.d7 ♘xd7 41.♖xd7 wins.

35.h4 ♘xh4 36.♖xg6+ ♙h7 37.♖c6 ♘g4 38.♖f4 ♖g7 White wins by 39.♘g6+ ♖xg6 40.♖xg6 ♙xg6 41.♖xg4+ so Black resigned.

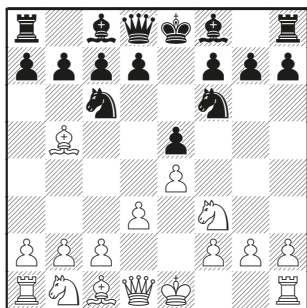
1-0

Carlsen played brilliantly to beat Grischuk in an almost level queenless middlegame.

Magnus Carlsen – Alexander Grischuk

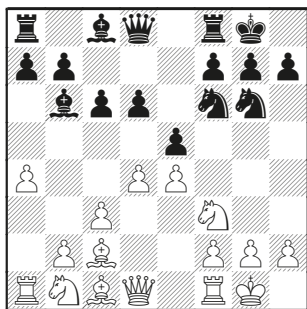
Vugar Gashimov Mem 2019 Shamkir AZE (9.3)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♖f6 4.d3



Slow but hard to meet.

4...♙c5 5.c3 0-0 6.0-0 d6 7.♙a4 ♗e7
8.♙c2 ♗g6 9.d4 ♙b6 10.a4 c6



The position is almost symmetrical but White has a small advantage.

11.dxe5 ♗xe5 12.♗xe5 dxe5 13.♖xd8 ♖xd8 14.a5 ♙c5 15.♗d2 A simplified position in which Carlsen is happy to try and increase his advantage.

15...♙e6 16.♖e1 b5 17.♗b3 ♙xb3 18.♙xb3 ♗g4 Black has surrendered the bishop pair for active play but slowly White pushes Black back.

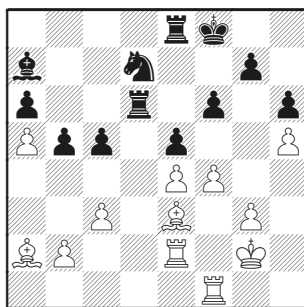
19.♖e2 ♖d6 20.♙g5 White has a slightly better position, as Black is weaker on the light squares.

20...♙f8 21.♖f1 ♗f6 22.g3 White aims for kingside expansion with f4.

22...a6 23.♙g2 ♗d7 24.♙c1 ♙a7 Aiming to put the knight on c5 but White has the advantage.

25.f4 f6 26.h4 ♖e8 27.h5 h6 Stopping h6 but now White can aim to open the kingside.

28.♙a2 c5 29.♙e3



White develops the bishop to a strong square, planning to sacrifice his e-pawn: a brilliant concept.

29...exf4 30.gxf4 ♖xe4 31.♙b1 ♖e7 32.♖fe1 f5 32...♗b8 is best; now Carlsen wraps up the game.

33.♙xf5 ♗f6 34.♙f3 ♗d5 34...♗xh5 35.♙xc5 wins or 35...♙xc5 36.♖xe7 wins.

35.♖d2 ♖d8 If 35...♗xe3 36.♖xd6 ♗xf5 37.♖xe7 ♗xe7 38.♖xa6 ♙b8 39.♖a8 ♙c7 40.a6 ♗d6 41.a7 ♙b6 42.♖e8+ ♗xe8 43.a8♖ wins.

36.♙e4 ♖ed7 37.♖ed1 ♗f6 38.♖xd7 ♗xd7 38...♖xd7 39.♖xd7 ♗xd7 40.♙b7 ♗e7 41.♙xa6 ♗d8 42.♙xb5 ♗f6 43.b4 ♗d5 44.♙xc5 ♙xc5 45.bxc5 ♗xc3 46.♙c4 ♗a4 47.♗e4 ♗xc5+ 48.♗d5 ♗d7 49.♗c6 ♗b8+ 50.♗d6 ♗c8 51.a6 wins.

39.♖d6

1-0

A magnificent ending by Carlsen.

VERA MENCHIK



THE FIRST WARRIOR FOR WOMEN IN CHESS

By Pete Tamburro

Described by Fred Reinfeld as the woman ‘who did much to break down age-old prejudices’, Vera Menchik (later Stevenson) was the quintessential pioneer for women’s chess in the 20th century.

Born in Moscow in 1906 of an English mother, she learned chess at age nine. In 1921, the family, without the father, moved to Hastings, where she fell under the tutelage of Geza Maroczy.

Among her high profile victims were Euwe, Reshevsky, Sultan Kahn, Samisch, Yates, Mieses, Colle

She started playing at the Hastings Congress in 1923 and, by 1929, was playing in the top section. British Chess Magazine in 1944 took note of one in particular of her tournament achievements: ‘In the Maribor tournament of 1934, she finished third, behind Pirc and Steiner, but ahead of Rejfir, Spielmann, Asztalos and Vidmar.’ She played at the great Carlsbad tournament in 1929 and Moscow, 1935, where she was at or one away from the bottom of the tournament table.

Her true dominance came in the women’s world championship tournaments (from the very first one) where her record was an astonishing 78 wins, 1 loss and 4

draws. Her major rival was Sonja Graf, but her 1937 match (11.5-4.5) ended any questions about the difference in their abilities. Vera also married R.H.S. Stevenson in 1937, who was 28 years older than she was. She then represented her adopted country as world champion. He died in 1943, and a friend writing in BCM in 1944 commented on how much his loss affected her.

She was dangerous enough that the men's international players had their amusement tempered by some embarrassing losses, and the Vera Menchik Club was formed. Edward Winter's site has a compilation of the various writings on this club and its origin. Among her high profile victims were Euwe, Reshevsky, Sultan Kahn, Samisch, Yates, Mieses, Colle and the one man who played her 20 times—Sir George Thomas, who scored six wins against eight losses with six draws against her. In 1942, she defeated a 77-year-old Jacques Mieses (who insisted on playing the exchange French as White and d6 as Black).

She was also an accomplished game annotator for Chess magazine until her death. She taught chess and encouraged its development throughout the country.

The August 1944 British Chess Magazine carried the news of her death

British Chess Magazine in 1944 took note of one in particular of her tournament achievements: 'In the Maribor tournament of 1934, she finished third, behind Pirc and Steiner, but ahead of Rejfir, Spielmann, Asztalos and Vidmar.' She played at the great Carlsbad tournament in 1929 and Moscow, 1935, where she was at or one away from the bottom of the tournament table

(on June 27) on its front page with this understandably emotion-laden comment: 'The news of this unspeakable tragedy will be received by the Chess world with sorrow and with abhorrence of the wanton and useless robot methods of a robot people.' Her mother and sister were also killed in the blast.

Fred Reinfeld in his *A Treasury of British Chess Masterpieces* (1950 - a little gem of a book), cites Thomas Wilson's letter in Chess magazine: 'She had perfected the art of living. Chess genius as she was she did not allow the game to rule out everything else and her interests were extensive. Her life had not always been easy, but she did not give way and her integrity was always maintained. In the records of her games in the memory of those who played with her and learnt from her she will live on.'

Below are two of her games.

Vera Menchik - Sonia Graf D46

Women's World Ch., 13.07.1937

Sonia Graf was her major rival in these years, and the tension of this world championship moment is reflected in the nervous play.

1.c4 e6 2.♘c3 d5 3.d4 ♘f6 4.♘f3 There is nothing wrong with the classical attack with 4.♙g5 ♙e7 5.e3

4...♘bd7 5.e3 White could have headed for the minority attack positions with 5.cxd5 exd5 (Black could transpose into a bad Gruenfeld with 5...♘xd5 6.e4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 g6 8.♙d3 ♙g7 9.0-0 c5 10.♙f4 where the knight not being on c6 or even able to go there makes the difference in the position.) 6.♙f4 c6 7.♖c2 and the rooks setting up behind an a4, a5 and b5 push was well-known at that time. Menchik was a positional player, so one wonders whether she felt like giving aggression a try.



Vera Menchik vs Jacques Mieses

5...c6 6.♙d3 ♘e7 Graf could have tried Slav-like positions with 6...dxc4 7.♙xc4 b5 8.♙e2 b4 (or 8...♙b7, but this lent credence to the suspicions mentioned before. Graf wants something quiet. Menchik wants to push the envelope a bit. Or maybe it's just that, at this point in the match, Menchik feels she can take risks against her opponent, who is going to lose the match 11.5-4.5, and this is the 14th game.)

7.0-0 0-0 8.e4 When White purposely plays e4 to block in the dark-squared bishop, thought is often given to 8.b3 h6 9.♙b2.

8...dxe4 9.♘xe4 This is a cousin to the dxe4 French Defence positions. The black pawn on c6 is not a plus, and white's pawn on c4 can be a plus as we discussed when we were covering the dxe4 French.

9...♘xe4 9...c5 10.dxc5 ♘xc5 11.♘xc5 ♙xc5 12.a3.

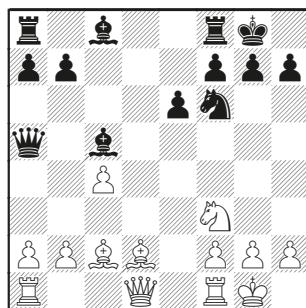
10.♙xe4 ♘f6 11.♙c2 Thanks to c4, the bishop can nestle safely at c2 and wait for the queen to show up at d3.

11...c5 Black has to play this thematic move or be permanently constricted and essentially just waiting to lose.

12.dxc5 ♔a5?! The queen move, however, is incomprehensible. What's the point? If anything, it leaves itself open to a3 and b4 and the queenside pawn majority starts moving. 12...♙xc5.

13.♙e3 White could mess up the black pawn structure with 13.c6 bxc6 14.♙d2 ♙b4 15.♙f4 ♙b7 16.♔e2 with a freer game.

13...♙xc5 14.♙d2



Lovely! Picks up a tempo and repositions the bishop on c3.

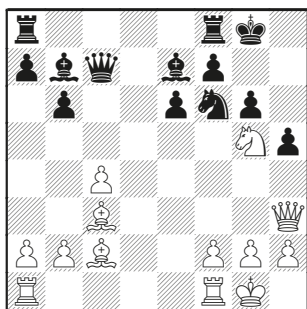
14...♖c7 If 14...♗b4 then 15.♗f4 ♜d8 16.♞e2 and White controls e5 and has the ability to mobilise the queenside.

15.♗c3 ♗e7 16.♞e2 b6 17.♞g5?! Either 17.♗e5 or; 17.♞e5, utilizing e5, could be played. ♞g5 is speculative and uncharacteristic of White. The psychological factors are speculative, but the moves played do raise questions.

17...g6 Better was 17...♗a6 18.b3 ♗b7 19.♞fd1 ♖c6 20.♞f3 ♞fd8=; A disaster could have arisen from 17...h6 18.♗e5 ♞c5 19.♗xf6 ♗xf6 20.♞e4 ♞e7 21.♞xf6+ ♞xf6 22.♞e4+- Was this what White was hoping for or expecting?

18.♞f3 She needed to preface the ♞f3 move with 18.♗e5 ♞c5 (18...♖c6 19.♗xf6 ♗xf6 20.♞e4 ♞c5 21.♗xa8±) 19.b4 ♞xb4 20.♞f3 ♞d7 21.♗c3 ♞xc4 22.♗b3 ♞c7 23.♞xe6!

18...♗b7 19.♞h3 h5



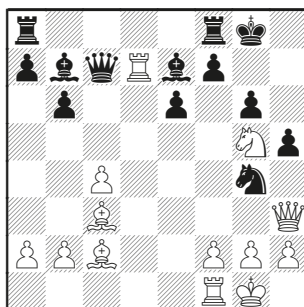
A bold but necessary defensive move. 19...♞fe8 20.♗xf6 ♗xf6 21.♞xh7+ ♗f8 22.h4±.

20.♞ad1 Good was 20.♞fe1 but, again, I wonder if she picked the game move in the hopes of catching her opponent not being alert.

20...♞g4??

Given the nature of the occasion, the following line must have been considered and maybe seen as a little too dangerous or complex, but that's like avoiding being hit by a car only to be hit by a train. 20...♞xc4 21.♞d7 ♗xg2 22.♞xg2 ♞xd7 23.♞xf7 ♞xf7 24.♞xa8+ ♞f8 25.♗xg6 ♞g4+ 26.♗h1 ♞xg6 27.♞g1 ♗g5 28.♗d2 ♞g7 29.♗xg5 ♞c2=.

21.♞d7!!



Ouch! Black Resigned as:

21...♞xd7 22.♞h5 gxh5 23.♗h7#

1-0

A very spirited effort.

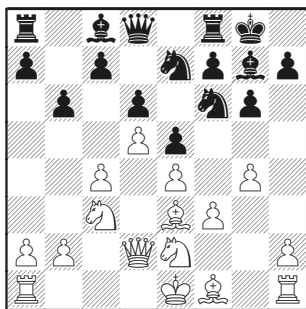
Vera Menchik - Sir George Thomas

London, 1932

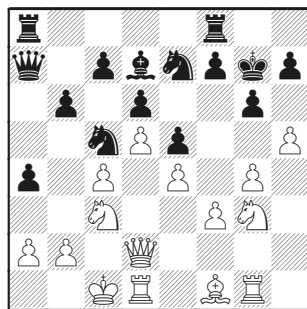
1.d4 ♞f6 2.c4 g6 3.♞c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 0-0 6.♗e3 e5 7.♞ge2 b6 Quite exciting would have been 7...♞bd7 8.d5 ♞c5 9.♞d2 a6 10.g4 b5.

8.♞d2 ♞c6 Anticipating White's d5 move might have been prepared with 8...♞bd7 9.0-0-0 a5.

9.d5 ♖e7 10.g4



16... ♖a7 17. ♔xf5 ♖xf5



This whole choice is interesting. Menchik was a g3/♔g2 player against the King's Indian. As with the Graf game, she showed at times her willingness to demonstrate she could attack from time to time.

10... ♖d7 11. ♖g1 Either 11.h4 a5 12.h5 or; 11. ♖g3 ♖c5 12.h4 would have been more aggressive, but part of her positional approach to chess may have encouraged her to build it up a bit more first.

11...a5 12.0-0-0 ♖c5 13. ♖g3 ♔d7 14.h4 a4 15.h5! Now she's on full throttle!

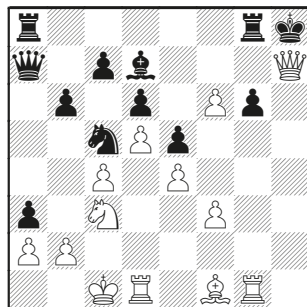
15... ♖b8 A lamentable attempt at distracting White from her business on the kingside, but it doesn't work.

16. ♔h6 Again, she preferred to prepare a bit more before playing an immediate knight offer. The immediate offer would have worked: 16. ♖f5 ♖xf5 17.gxf5 a3 18.b3 ♖a7 19. ♖b1 ♖a5 20. ♖c1 ♖b4 21.hxg6 fxg6 22.fxg6 hxg6 23. ♖xg6 ♖f6 24. ♖g3 ♖f7 25. ♔e2 ♖h8 26. ♖cg1+.

18. ♖f5+! ♖xf5 A better capture, yet equally doomed, was 18... ♔xf5 19.gxf5 f6 20.hxg6 hxg6 21. ♖b5 ♖b7 22.fxg6 ♖h8 23.f4 ♖xe4 24. ♖e3 ♖c5 25. ♔d3 ♖xd3+ 26. ♖xd3 a3 27.b3 ♖h2 28.fxe5 dxe5 29. ♖df1 ♖ah8 30. ♖f3 ♖g8 31. ♖g4 c5 32. ♖d6; Taking with the pawn leads to instant disaster: 18...gxf5 19. ♖g5+ ♖g6 (19... ♖h8 20. ♖f6+ ♖g8 21.h6+ ♖g8 21. ♖f6 ♖e6 22.dxe6.

19.gxf5 a3 The weak dark squares have left an open door to the black king.

20.f6+! ♖h8 21. ♖h6 ♖g8 22.hxg6 fxg6 23. ♖xh7+



Her true dominance came in the women's world championship tournaments (from the very first one) where her record was an astonishing 78 wins, 1 loss and 4 draws

1-0

A picturesque finish!

CARLSEN V CARUANA, LONDON 2018
BY RAYMOND KEENE AND BYRON JACOBS

A CRITICAL REVIEW CRITICALLY REVIEWED!

By Jimmy Adams

In our fast-moving world, the Carlsen v Caruana world title match has now retreated into the shadows and already entered the annals of chess history, but thanks to Ray Keene and Byron Jacobs we can always refresh our memory by reading their 208-page book on the contest, published by Everyman Chess. It is a well-written and well-balanced coverage of a clash between the two highest-rated chess players on the planet. All the games of the match are annotated, frequently move by move, there are round by round summaries, a review of previous world title matches or equivalent since the 18th century, profiles of the Champion and Challenger, and a 24-page account of the Berlin Candidates from which Fabiano qualified to play Magnus for the title. I would recommend it to players of club level as a useful and enjoyable read and a worthy addition to any chess library.

However, for some reason, the book received unduly severe criticism from one chess writer, Olympiu Urcan, on his website www.patreon.com, which seems to

have triggered the withdrawal of the book from sale at the London-based 'Chess & Bridge' retailer, apparently on the grounds that its "customers deserve better"!

But when I looked at Olympiu's review of the book, I thought most of the criticisms

he made were either debatable, dubious, unfair or unsound. So here I will explain why I felt this way in the hope that from now on highly critical reviewers will adopt a broader perspective and not just focus on identifying typos and mistakes.

Olympiu makes no secret that he considers the 'instant' chess book to be a product of "new publishing speeds and age-old greed" and "usually chases profit at the cost of style, quality, depth and substance."



For Ray Keene the Carlsen v Caruana match book was a celebration of his 50 years in chess publishing.

But in reality there is nothing "new" about the speed of production of chess books - after all, *Fischer v Spassky: The Chess Match of the Century* by Svetozar Gligoric came out within days of the completion of the match, as far back as 1972.

And as for “greed” - well, a famous quote from Dr Samuel Johnson, compiler of the first English dictionary, comes to mind: “No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money!” Indeed, one manager at a London publishing house told me that the financial returns from chess books were not dissimilar to placing money in a high-interest bank account! No, in this case, money is not the motivator. Ray Keene has a quite different agenda: he loves chess and he wants to continue the long-standing tradition of producing English language books on World Chess Championships, started in 1948 by Harry Golombek, his predecessor as chess correspondent for the *Times*.

In fact, Keene has been instrumental in bringing back into print all these old classics, in cooperation with Hardinge Simpole publishing. Moreover, he has sought to fill the gaps by creating new books, using annotations first appearing in the BCM, where Harry Golombek and Peter Clarke reported on 1960s title matches. I have to say that after looking through the pages of *Carlsen v Caruana, FIDE World Championship, London 2018*, I see no lack of style, quality or substance, but, instead, an attractive and lasting record of a very significant chess encounter.

Instant chess books

However, the assessment of such works should also take the publisher’s standpoint into account. There is a much better chance of selling a sufficient number of limited shelf-life match books if these are made available very quickly, when the event is still fresh in the memory. Then, hopefully, with mass media interest surrounding the match, copies of the book will also reach the wider public. It is not a question of “greed” but commercial viability in an honourable quest to promote chess.

The instant chess book made its first major appearance after the Fischer v Spassky match of 1972. In the UK alone three fine



The Carlsen v Caruana match was staged in a building that for a century housed the Central College of Arts and Crafts in an area steeped in chess history.

books on this epic encounter were published. These were authored by Svetozar Gligoric, Harry Golombek and C.H.O’D. Alexander.

The first half of Hugh Alexander’s book, published by Penguin, was written before the match even started and contained a great deal of information and opinion on the contemporary chess scene, rules of play, attitude to the game, technical skill, history of chess, run-up to the championship, profiles of the champion and challenger, their background, strengths and weaknesses, personality and character, previous encounters and prospects in the match, together with annotated examples of their playing style.

From the very start, Alexander made clear the objectives and limitations of a book published so soon after the event:

Plan of the Book

Part One was completed before the match and nothing in it will be changed;

I say “will be” because this too is being written beforehand. Part Two is the event itself. *After the Battle* tries to sum up the lessons to be learnt from what has happened. The book is in a sense two books in one, but it was thought that this stereoscopic “before and after” view would not only be of interest to the reader but as a snapshot of feelings at the time on the most eagerly awaited encounter in the history of chess it might have some more permanent value as well.

For the Ordinary Player

As indicated in Chapter 1, this book is meant to appeal to a far wider range of players who would normally buy a book on a World Chess Championship: to social players, to players who may never have bought a chess book in their lives - or only a beginner's book. If you are in this category, what can you get out of the book?

Almost all of Part One should interest you if you are intrigued by the strange microcosmos of chess, its political

Hugh Alexander's graphically illustrated instant book on Fischer v Spassky 1972 was designed by Derek Birdsall - the man also behind the highly prized Pirelli glamour girl calendars

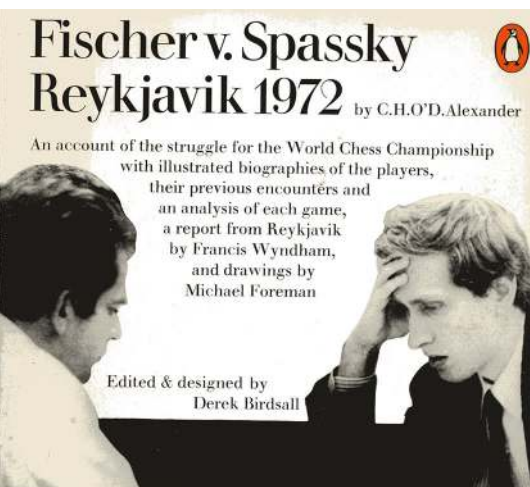


Former England No.1 C.H.O'D Alexander

overtones and the striking characters of the championship contenders. Most of it can be read and enjoyed without any technical knowledge at all. The description of the atmosphere at Reykjavik in *Interlude* should also interest all players, whatever their strength.

The difficulty arises in Part Two with the games themselves; if you are a weak player you can understand very little of what is happening - indeed at this level, it is doubtful whether anyone except the players wholly understands the games, at least until much subsequent analysis has been a clone.

Take the openings; these are the result of many years of detailed analysis by hundreds of top-class players, plus the most thorough and careful preparation by the two players for the match itself - the correctness of a move depends on the finest tactical and strategic judgement on what will happen far ahead. All the amateur can do is to get a general notion of the players' respective ideas - that White is trying to occupy the centre in a certain way and that Black is countering this in another way;



he cannot really understand why White succeeded and Black failed. But he can get an idea of the struggle and the drama; he can see that White's position does look better and he can be made aware where Black faltered.

In the middle game - when the forces are fully deployed and the strategic plans clearly marked out - there is much less theory than in the opening but a very great deal of detailed tactical planning backed by fine strategic judgement. Here again, all the amateur can do is follow the general pattern and take the detail for granted. After the middle game, one of three things may happen. The position may simplify out and a draw be agreed: no more to be said. One player may get completely on top and win by an attack; this we can all enjoy - it is both the most spectacular and the simplest part of top-class chess. Or there may be an ending; in this too, try to follow the ideas rather than the detail.

Summing up, play through the games quickly, don't worry about what you don't understand, try to follow something of the ideas running through the play - and you will enjoy the struggle and get a little of its flavour. Later, you may be able to look more deeply.

For the Expert

A book such as this, produced immediately after the end of the match, cannot hope to be, and does not pretend to be, definitive in the analysis of the games. Indeed, a definitive book can only be written once the players themselves have commented on the games. What I have tried to do is to maintain a reasonable level of professional competence so that broadly speaking the right points are stressed, the right impression is given of the game as a whole, and at least a substantial portion of the detail is correct. I hope I have come near enough to this aim for the book to be of interest to you technically as well as generally."



It was as if Bobby was keeping a close watch on the match from the street running alongside the old college!

In this way, Alexander established the framework for all future instant chess books, although it should not be forgotten that Harry Golombek and Bob Wade had previously authored quality hardbacks of World Championships during the period 1948-1963, which, although not instant, nevertheless came out within a few months of the matches.

However, in one particular respect, Alexander's book remains a cut above the rest. Its distinctive square shape, imaginative layout and lavish illustrations came from the creative inspiration of the graphic designer Derek Birdsall. In those days he was perhaps best known for his work on the Pirelli pin-up girl calendars, and he later went on to gain further international renown in graphic design, run his own studio and also teach at the Royal College of Art in London. Coincidentally, as a young man, he was also a student at the London Central School of Arts and Crafts in Southampton Row - the very same venue used for the Carlsen v Caruana match!



Was Magnus Carlsen's choice of opening as Black influenced by the Romanesque walkway facing the match venue?

Indeed, the century-old building hosting the World Championship was originally purpose-built for the study of Arts, Crafts and Design but a few years ago the students were relocated to new premises near King's Cross: hence the vacated college is now hired out for functions.

As a postscript, immediately after the 1972 Fischer v Spassky match Birdsall cooperated with Alexander on another equally attractive hardback, *A Book of Chess*, which covered a wide variety of chess topics catering for the enjoyment of all levels of chess players.

The streets of London

By a second coincidence, the match venue for the Carlsen - Caruana contest was situated only a few minutes' walk from a number of other chess-related locations. In their book, the authors mention that directly opposite its entrance is Sicilian Avenue, a beautiful pedestrian walkway constructed in Romanesque style. Of course, the Sicilian Defence featured prominently in the match.

But the authors did not mention that running along one side of the venue is Fisher Street. No doubt Olympiu will spot the misspelling but, for me, the message was clear: Bobby's spirit lives on and remains close at hand!

Walking directly south from the venue takes you to a junction where Holborn underground station is sited. If you cross the road here and turn right, along the west side of High Holborn, after a few minutes' walk you will see the architectural splendour of Holborn Town Hall, the playing arena for a very strong Great Britain v USSR chess match held in 1947.

Then if you retrace your steps to the east side of High Holborn and take the first turning on the right, you will find yourself in a narrow alleyway, Great Turnstile, where at No.10 both the *New Statesman* and Turnstile Press ran their businesses. Byron Jacobs is a former chess columnist of the *New Statesman*, while the Turnstile Press published the not-quite-instant book by Bob Wade and

William Winter on the 1951 Botvinnik v Bronstein World Championship match. Furthermore, at No.7 Great Turnstile, for half a century prior to the Second World War, you would have seen the Frank Hollings bookshop, whose own extensive chess publishing catalogue included books on the World Championship match between Lasker and Schlechter 1910 by Hoffer and the London 1932 international tournament by Alekhine. Later, as fate would have it, the shop was destroyed by enemy action during the war and new premises were found just off Kingsway at 68 Great Queen Street, five minutes' walk directly south of the match venue. Incidentally, this street also houses Freemasons' Hall, frequented by Grand Masters of a different kind!

Proceeding even further south, but this time on the left-hand side of Kingsway, you come to Portugal Street where, close to the historic Old Curiosity Shop, made famous by Charles Dickens' novel, was once situated the headquarters of G.Bell & Sons, publishers of such classics as the Best Games of Capablanca, Alekhine, Euwe, Tartakower, Keres, etc.

Finally, to bring the geography and history right up to date, walking north from the match venue across the busy main road you come to the continuation of Southampton Row, where the first turning on the right will lead you into Great Ormond Street, well known for its world-class children's hospital but also the home of chess publisher Batsford.

Now, back to business...

Olympiu writes in a very similar and highly critical style to that of chess historian Edward Winter, whose website and books he praises and promotes. In fact, I have sometimes wondered if they are one and the same person!

Both are ardent critics of Ray Keene's work in general, often citing the issue of "cut and

paste". Olympiu states that the introduction to the Carlsen v Caruana book had already appeared in the summer issue of *Synapsia*, and was also available online. Well, that may be so, although I suspect that hardly any readers will even be aware of this magazine, let alone read it. But anyway, so what? Keene did write the article which sets the scene and conveys the atmosphere prior to the contest. Leaving this introduction in the present tense (another complaint by Olympiu!) in fact generates a sense of pre-match anticipation and excitement.

Olympiu also bemoans the fact that "large chunks" of material had already appeared in Keene's weekly chess column in *The Spectator*. But again, I don't see this as a problem, since magazines, books and online sites are three different media. I never heard anyone complain about the fact that Gligoric's annotations in the Fischer v Spassky instant book were "cut and pasted" from the daily Icelandic bulletins.

And does anyone complain that the majority of Edward Winter's most informative chesshistory.com website is essentially "cut and paste". No, without question, people just enjoy the historical content he so skilfully presents.

Then again, Olympiu is annoyed that the early chapter "History of the World Championship" replicates some material used in Keene's books of nearly twenty years ago and without any revisions. This includes his book on Kasparov versus Kramnik in 2000, *The Brain Games World Chess Championship*, which, however, was also published by Everyman Chess and edited by Byron Jacobs. In any event, these accounts of old-time greats like Lasker, Capablanca, Alekhine, etc. do not need changing. As they say, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Or, to give it a topical context, "If it ain't broke, don't Brexit!"

Olympiu then moves on to what he considers to be inaccuracies of historical matters in the book.

“The authors offer London as the capital of ‘the chess world from 1846 to 1883’ with no reasonable explanation.”

In fact, Keene mentions that Staunton rose to the top by 1846 after defeating his principal rivals in matches. Then, later, more strong players appeared on the scene, including Zukertort. In other words there were significant competitive events up to 1883 (which was the year of the mighty London tournament won by Zukertort ahead of Steinitz) but then, apart from “a few further exceptions in 1899, 1922, 1927, 1932 and 1946, no grandmaster level chess event took place in London until 1973...”

Probably because they were team events, Keene does not mention the two 10-board Great Britain v USSR matches staged in 1947 and 1954, where virtually the entire Soviet sides were of grandmaster strength!

Olympiu mentions that Lionel Kieseritzky’s name is misspelt. Well, yes, it should indeed be ‘zky’ at the end, not ‘sky’ as in the book. However, Keene knows perfectly well how to spell this name, so does not need to be “publicly admonished” - see, for example, his book on Staunton, published when Olympiu was just five years old! Incidentally, I have found to my own cost that computer software sometimes makes unwelcome changes to spellings in manuscripts due to its own inbuilt ‘intelligence’ and these may remain unnoticed. Indeed, this may well have been the case here. Kieseritzky was an Estonian and, to be sure, his name has an unusual spelling.

An unresolved mystery

Then again, “The authors... laughably claim E.S. Freund had the pseudonym Jean Dufresne (as opposed to the other way around)”.

In fact, this is not a laughing matter but more an unresolved mystery. Some years

ago, at the London Book Fair, I had got into a conversation with a German antiquarian book dealer, as we had a mutual interest in Zukertort. Our discussion moved on to Jean Dufresne, the loser of the famous “Evergreen Game” against Anderssen and a prolific chess writer who had sought Zukertort’s help when publishing a revised edition of his *Grosses Schach-Handbuch*. The dealer told me Jean Dufresne was Jewish and lived in Berlin all his life. Both his parents were also Jewish, yet Dufresne is a French name. Perhaps ‘Freund’, which is a common German name, was an earlier adopted family name or even his mother’s maiden name? After all, members of the Jewish community often changed their Hebraic names to counter Anti-Semitism. I was also told that Dufresne’s ancestral Jewish name from way back was something like Samuels or Solomon. All this made sense to me, but when I asked why the ‘E.S.’, I learned that Jean Dufresne liked to play around with words and even wrote a book on word puzzles. The E.S. came from JohannES Freund. Johannes (or

What is the truth behind the anagrammatic pseudonym of Jean Dufresne?



Yochanan) is the Jewish equivalent of the French ‘Jean’ (or the English ‘John’). In this way, he also kept hold of his Jewish roots as the ‘E’ stood for his middle name, ‘Ephraim’, the same as his father, while the ‘S’ stood for his Hebraic surname. There were three known novels published under the name of E.S.Freund and also an article on Dufresne’s ‘anagrammatic pseudonym’ in the German regional chess magazine *Rochade*, but I haven’t seen these. It might be an idea to enlist the services of a genealogist to clarify the precise ancestral line and the dates of all the name changes.

A few more complaints

Returning once again to the principal matters in hand, Olympiu censures Keene for stating that Alekhine died in Lisbon. Well, it is true that Alekhine died in Estoril - but this is in Lisbon! To be precise ‘Greater Lisbon’ but nevertheless in the Region of Lisbon and on the Coast of Lisbon. No doubt many readers will be aware that Ian Fleming lived in Estoril at the same time as Alekhine and its very big casino was the inspiration for his first James Bond novel *Casino Royale*.

Olympiu then says: “Keene repeats the now commonly regurgitated phony statistics that... chess can now boast 11 million games played online, worldwide every day; 600 million active chess players and no fewer than one billion smart phones in use with chess apps!”

Despite that old adage ‘There are lies, damned lies - and statistics!’, in fact these “phony” (perhaps this should read ‘phoney’) stats may very well be true.

Olympiu continues by stating that Keene “omits important World Championship matches in his recital, such as those contested by Carl Schlechter and Efim Bogoljubow.” But, again, an attentive reader would have noted that Keene only gives accounts of matches where the challenger defeated the



Joke or no joke, there is never a dull moment with Woody!

champion to become the new title holder. Schlechter drew his match with Lasker and Bogoljubow lost twice to Alekhine, so they are omitted. Keene’s chapter is designed to provide less knowledgeable readers with a brief overview of past champions. Remember, this is a book on the Carlsen v Caruana match and not a comprehensive history of the World Chess Championship!

Hell-raiser Woody

More complaints follow: “The book misinterprets events during the Carlsen vs. Caruana match itself. As footage and the actor’s own account reveal, Woody Harrelson’s toppling of Caruana’s king was not an accident, as the authors believe. It was a pre-planned gag.”

However, what Woody actually said was: “I thought it would be funny if I accidentally knocked over the king, but then it turned out the joke’s on me when I played d4.”

Looking at the footage it seems Woody was having some trouble understanding Caruana’s instructions with regard to

playing his ‘ceremonial first move’ and he made a genuine mistake of playing 1.d4 instead of the intended 1.e4.

We might better say that knocking over the king was done “accidentally on purpose” and in fact, it was reported as being accidental in the following day’s newspapers! But I don’t think it was a “pre-planned gag”: knowing Woody’s temperament it was rather a spontaneous act of impetuosity!

After all, some readers might remember that way back in 2002, in Woody’s hell-raising days, after appearing on stage in a London theatre, he had been photographed by a paparazzo with a couple of girls who had offered him “a walk on the wild side”. Inevitably his steady girlfriend soon found out about this and a bitter argument ensued. Woody subsequently vented his frustration by kicking the door and forcing his way out of a black cab while it was in transit along a busy London street. He then went on the run (literally!) and was chased by no fewer than fourteen police officers before being apprehended and charged with causing criminal damage. However, it all ended happily for him as the taxi driver had no wish to press charges and was satisfied with just accepting compensation for the necessary repairs. Moreover, six years later Woody married that long-term girlfriend.

But there was a sequel. A year or so ago Woody was making a movie that was partly shot in Bloomsbury Square, at the other end of Sicilian Avenue! It is entitled *Lost in London* and based on the very same real-life episode that had taken place fifteen years earlier.

I don’t know of any other “misinterpretations” referred by Olympiu.

Pure chess matters

Olympiu states: “The Rossolimo variation of the Sicilian Defence is not mentioned once by its name, although it figured prominently in the match.”

Well, there is no doubt in my mind that this is because Keene does not believe it should be called the Rossolimo Variation. Having studied Nimzowitsch’s work in great detail, he knows very well that it was Nimzowitsch who first recommended, after 1.e4 c5 2.♗f3 ♘c6, the move 3.♗b5 in his classic *Chess Praxis* - twenty years before Rossolimo played it! Here, under the main header, The Triumph of the ‘Bizarre and ‘Ugly’ Move, Nimzo introduces the variation by annotating a game he won against Gilg at Kecskemet 1927, which opened the same way. He writes: “Here we find the bishop at QN5 in a close game, which formation, according to Tarrasch, is ‘less forgivable, in a master, than to leave a piece en prise.’ In reality, the bishop at QN5 appears to be well posted and could be placed there in 70 per cent of close games without prejudice, probably even with advantage.”

Keene too, in his highly acclaimed magnum opus, *Nimzowitsch: A Reappraisal*, also annotated the Gilg game. Of course, if he had called the opening the Nimzowitsch Variation instead of the Rossolimo, reviewers with insufficient knowledge of chess history would have still found fault, so I expect that is why he just referred to it simply as “the ♗b5 variation against the Sicilian Defence.”

Olympiu’s criticisms continue with: “Upon closer scrutiny, even the games’ most entertaining moments lack thorough treatment.”

Actually, this is not a book crammed with dense computer analysis but rather reader-friendly explanatory chess prose suitable for club players. Nevertheless, there are in fact about fifty (!) cases where the authors give special treatment to “entertaining moments”, providing not only analysis but also additional small-size diagrams to make it easier for the reader to follow these might-have-been lines of play.

I found the book’s commentaries very helpful in keeping track of the direction of play and even went through some of the games on my computer with Fritz running, whilst

simultaneously reading the annotations. This way I got the best of both worlds: the explanations and the tactical variations. In any event, personally, I do not like books simply repeating long lines of computer analysis, which are all too prevalent today.

Getting personal

Olympiu goes on to say that the Scandinavian interview with Carlsen quoted in the book has been incorrectly attributed, and this time at least he is right! But let's just say that while Keene was spending time in the VIP lounge gathering information and making contacts, something got "lost in translation" with his Norwegian colleagues.

Then we have another swipe: "The repeated usage of 'I (RDK)' is comical as Keene's cartoonish vanity is on full display throughout the book. To pick but one example, he preposterously writes: 'In fact, while researching for this book, the curious fact came to light that I had personally organised every match in London which might be considered to have decided the World Chess Championship from 1872 up to 2018!'"

Well, it goes without saying that if there are joint authors it is sometimes necessary to identify one from another, so such a criticism is a non-starter. I counted fewer than half a dozen instances of this in the book and they are all related to private conversations Keene had with various colleagues.

Incidentally, most of today's chess books have at least two authors, whose contributions are by no means always identified individually. These are books written jointly by a man (or a woman) and a machine!

Keene certainly does have a sense of humour but what he says also happens to be true. Steinitz defeated Zukertort in a match in London 1872, after which the only World Championship matches to be held in London, prior to Carlsen v Caruana, were Karpov v Kasparov in 1986, Kasparov v Short in 1993, and Kasparov

v Kramnik in 2000 - in each case Keene obtained the sponsorship and managed the organisation, thereby re-establishing London as a leading world chess venue.

As for the "cartoonish vanity", my personal opinion is "If you've got it, flaunt it!" Incidentally, not long ago a dormant Portuguese ancestral title of 'Count' was revived and bestowed upon Keene for his services to chess. Jacobs too has served chess extremely well over the years with his handling of Everyman Chess, which has become just about the most prolific chess publisher in the world. So maybe we should give him an honorary title too so that the front cover of the Carlsen v Caruana book would name the authors as Count Raymondo and Lord Byron!

By the way, Olympiu too is not averse to a little self-promotion. He charges for viewing his website and, in the process of proclaiming his credentials, writes: "Play-wise, during my journeys I've blitzed with Eastern European grandmasters, ex-Soviet park hustlers, MIT scholars, London pensioners, Indian professors, Chinese prodigies, Filipino wizards, Japanese CEOs, Australian explorers, Balinese cabbies and descendants of North Sumatra's Batak tribe. I also took part in high-profile exhibition games against Magnus Carlsen, Hou Yifan and other world-class phenomena. The most remarkable moments from these experiences will be shared here ..." By these standards, Keene has got some catching up to do.

Anyway, Olympiu has yet more to get off his chest: "The lack of editorial rigour is just as revealing. There are serial misspellings (including Anand's first name), typos and ungrammatical sentences. But why care about form and style when you clearly don't care much about substance? Or your readers?"

In fact, as far as I can see, the editorial standards in the book are very high. I



Holborn became the centre of world chess last November!

didn't notice any "serial misspellings". True, Viswanathan is missing an 'a' on one occasion, but elsewhere, including the back cover, it is spelt correctly. But 'finallist' should indeed only have one 'l'. A truly appalling error, I think we can all agree! I didn't even see any more "typos" or "ungrammatical sentences", but then again when I receive a new book I read it for entertainment and instruction, I don't proofread it looking for typos and errors.

Also, again contrary to Olympiu's assertions, Keene knows his readers very well. His record over many years shows that he continues to be a great promoter of chess as his books and columns cater for mass audiences as well as proficient players.

And as for "editorial rigour", maybe Olympiu should avail himself of this too and moderate his language, which can get deeply personal at times. There was a lot of nastiness in the Karpov-Kasparov chess era and to his great credit Vishy Anand brought back good sporting behaviour when he became champion. Magnus Carlsen and his last two challengers have also displayed gentlemanly conduct. Certain chess reviewers would

do well to follow their example instead of stabbing authors with their pen.

Olympiu raises his eyebrows that Nigel Short, in his foreword, does not mention the authors of the book by name, and also asks why Nigel is providing a foreword at all. Well, sometimes an event can indeed completely overshadow the author. After all, Tony Blair did not mention the author by name in his foreword to Keene's Kasparov v Kramnik match book!

Moreover Nigel is now a FIDE Vice-President, so it is only natural that he should make a contribution to this celebratory work on the World Championship, even more so that it was staged in London...sorry, I mean Holborn.

A final word

To conclude, I think most club players will find this book a pleasant and informative read and come away with real insight into the games of the match. It is quite an achievement to maintain the interest from beginning to end when there were so many draws, but the authors have succeeded in doing this - and in fine style.

POLAR CAPITAL JERSEY 2019



TRIUMPH OF SERGEI TIVIAKOV

By IM Shaun Taulbut

Jersey was home to another Open tournament attracting strong players.

The Open tournament was won by Grandmaster Sergei Tiviakov - now of The Netherlands and originally from Russia - with 7.5/9. Second was Tiger Hillarp Persson on 7/9 and third was Alan Merry with 6.5/9.

Sergei Tiviakov lost in the first round to Olaf Steffens but then scored 7.5/8, only drawing with Tiger Hillarp Persson.

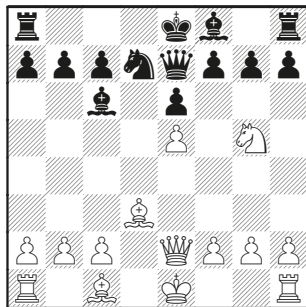
Here are some of the most interesting and crucial games of the tournament.

The battle between the English IMs was won by Alan Merry after a sharp opening.

Jack Rudd - Alan B Merry

Polar Capital Jersey Open
St Clement Bay JCI (3,2)

1.d4 e6 2.e4 d5 3.♘d2 dxe4 4.♗xe4 ♙d7
5.♗f3 ♙c6 6.♙d3 ♘d7 7.♖e2 ♗gf6
8.♗eg5 ♖e7 9.♗e5 ♗xe5 10.dxe5 ♘d7



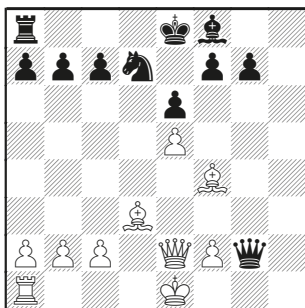
The position is equal but now White goes astray grabbing the h-pawn.

11. ♖xh7 ♖xh7 12. ♗xh7 ♖h4 Forcing the white bishop to retreat is the key plan.

13. ♗d3 ♗xg2 14. ♖g1 ♖xh2 The white rook is trapped and must be given up for the bishop.

15. ♖xg2 ♖xg2 Black has a safe extra pawn.

16. ♗f4



16...0-0-0 16... ♖g1+ 17. ♖f1 ♖g4 18. ♗g3 ♖b4+ 19. ♗e2 ♗c5 is very strong and should win quickly as the white king is not well placed.

17.0-0-0 ♗c5 18. ♗g3 g6 19. ♖b1 ♗xd3 20.cxd3 ♗d4 21.a3 ♖d5 22.f4 c5 23. ♖c2 ♖b8 24. ♗d2 ♖h1+ 25. ♖a2 ♖f3 26. ♗h2 b6 27. ♖b3 ♖d5 28. ♖xd5 ♗xd5 29. ♗g1 ♖b7 30. ♖b3 ♗g7 31. ♖c2 ♗d8 32. ♗e3 ♖c6 33. b3 ♗h8 34. d4 ♗h3 35. ♖d3 ♗f8 36. ♖e4 cxd4 37. ♗xd4 ♗xb3 38. ♗h2 ♗xa3 39. ♗h7 ♗b4

With the threat of ...♗b2 pinning and winning the white bishop so White resigned.

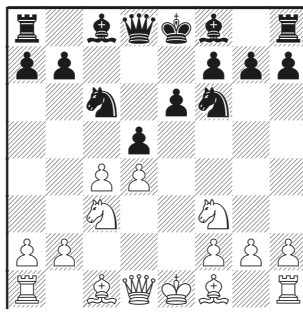
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Round 6 saw two games crucial for the determination of the prizes; first, a tactical melee in which Tiger Hillarp Persson held his cool.

Jean-Pierre Le Roux - Tiger Hillarp Persson

Polar Capital Jersey Open
St Clement Bay JCI (6.2)

1. ♖f3 c5 2.c4 ♗f6 3. ♗c3 ♗c6 4.e3 e6 5.d4 cxd4 6.exd4 d5



A normal Queen's Gambit position.

7.cxd5 ♗xd5 8. ♗d3 ♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10. ♖e1 ♗f6 11. ♗e4 ♗ce7 12. ♗e5 White retains the initiative because of his more active pieces.

12...♗f5 Black can also play 12...♗g6; On f5 the knight is more active but also can be attacked.

13.g4 Good for an advantage; also worth consideration was 13. ♗g4 when, if 13...♗e7 (13... ♗b6 14. ♗xf6+ ♖xf6 15. ♖d3 with a somewhat better position for White) 14. ♗xf5 exf5, 15. ♗xd5 is winning for White, eg: 15... ♖xd5 16. ♗h6+ gxh6 17. ♖xe7 when the black kingside is destroyed.

13...♗h4 13... ♗fe7 is also playable.

14.f4 14. ♖b3 is worth consideration, increasing the pressure on d5.

14...♗e7 15. ♗xd5 Also good is 15. ♗xd5 exd5 16. ♗h1 ♗g6 17.f5 ♗xe5 18.dxe5 with White standing better.

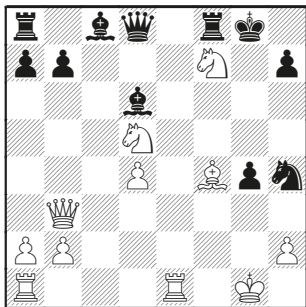
15...exd5 16.f5 g6 17.♖b3 gxf5 18.♗xd5
 Not the best; 18.♗h6 ♜e8 19.♗xd5 ♗e6
 20.♖g3 ♖xd5 21.gxf5+ ♗g6 22.fxe6
 ♖xe6 with equality

18...♗d6 A strong move leaving the knight
 on d5 exposed.

19.♗f4 If 19.♗h6 ♗e6 20.♗xf8 ♗xf8
 21.♖g3 ♗xd5 22.gxf5+ ♖h8 and Black is
 winning with two pieces for a rook.

19...fxg4 Controlling f3 and blocking the
 g-file; now White plays a sacrifice.

20.♗xf7



White goes in for a faulty combination
 lured by the prospect of winning the black
 queen if Black makes a mistake

20...♖xf7 Not 20...♗xf7 21.♖e8+
 ♖xe8 22.♗f6+ wins. The position
 looks very dangerous for Black but he
 has adequate defence.

21.♗xd6 21.♗e7+ ♖g7 22.♗xd6 ♗f3+
 23.♖h1 ♖xd6 is winning.

21...♗f3+ 22.♖h1 ♖xd6 23.♖e7+ ♖g6
 White has no good continuation as ♖c2+ is
 met by ...♗f5 and mate on h2 is threatened.

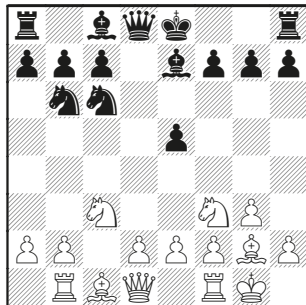
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The following tense struggle saw Tiviakov
 win to share the lead:

Alan B Merry – Sergei Tiviakov

Polar Capital Jersey Open
 St Clement Bay JCI (6.1)

1.c4 e5 2.♗c3 ♗f6 3.♗f3 ♗c6 4.g3 d5
5.cxd5 ♗xd5 6.♗g2 ♗b6 7.0-0 ♗e7 8.♖b1



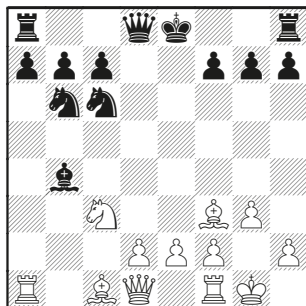
White plans the thematic queenside advance
 b4, delaying moving the d-pawn.

8...♗e6 9.b4 e4 After 9...♗xb4 10.♗xe5 ♗xe5
 11.♖xb4 White is much better; 9...a6 looks best.

10.♗xe4 ♗xa2 11.♖a1 ♗d5 Possible is
 11...♗xb4 12.d4 a5 13.♗c5 ♗xc5 14.dxc5
 ♖xd1 15.♖xd1 ♗a4 16.♖d2 ♗c3 17.♗g5
 when White has a slightly better position.

12.♗c3 12.♗c5 ♗xb4 13.d4 f5 14.♗d2
 a5 15.♖b1 0-0 16.♗xb4 axb4 17.♖xb4 is
 slightly better for White.

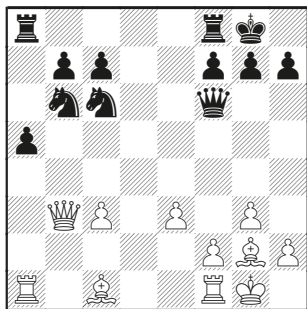
12...♗xf3 13.♗xf3 ♗xb4



Black has an extra pawn but White has the two bishops in compensation.

14. ♖b3 White also has 14. ♗b2 0-0 15. ♘a4, with compensation for the pawn.

14...a5 15.e3 ♖f6 16. ♗g2 ♗xc3 17.dxc3 0-0



Black has an extra pawn but at the moment he is tied down

18. ♗a3 ♖fb8 Protecting b7 allows the queenside to unravel.

19. ♖fd1 a4 20. ♖c2 ♗a5 The knights have outposts on the queenside now so Black has the advantage.

21. ♖d4 ♗b3 22. ♖h4 h6 Not 22... ♖xh4 23.gxh4 ♗xa1 24. ♖f5 ♗b3 25.h5 ♖a5, when 26. ♖f4 is unclear.

23. ♖f1 ♖d8 24.c4 24. ♗xb7 ♖ab8 25. ♗g2 ♖d2 26. ♖e4 c5 27. ♖f4 ♖e6 28. ♖xe6 fxe6 29. ♗h3 ♖e8 is better for Black.

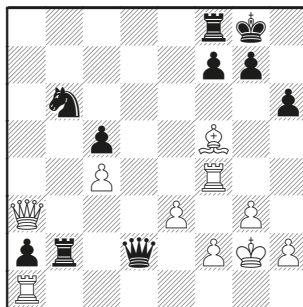
24... ♖d2 25. ♖e4 c6 26. ♗h3 26. ♖f4 ♖e6 27. ♖xe6 ♗f7 31. ♖xe8 ♗xe8 32. ♗b4 ♗xc4 33. ♖d1 ♗bd2 34. ♗e6 b5 is good for Black.

26...c5 26... ♗d7 27. ♖f4 ♖e5 28. ♖f3 ♗f6 29. ♖f5 ♖e6 is also good.

27. ♖xb7 ♖d6 28. ♖f4 ♖f8 29. ♗f5 ♖a2 Black gains the initiative and White is driven back now.

30. ♗c1 ♗xc1 31. ♖xc1 a3 The black passed a-pawn will win the game for Black.

32. ♗g2 ♖b2 33. ♖a7 a2 34. ♖a3 ♖d2 35. ♖a1



35... ♗xc4 36. ♖xc4

If 36. ♖xc5 ♗xe3+ 37. ♗h3 g5 38. ♖f3 g4+ 39. ♗g4 ♗xg4 40. ♗xg4 ♖b1 41. ♖xa2 ♖xa2 42. ♖f6 ♖a4+ 43. ♗h3 ♖d7+ 44. ♗g2 ♖c8 45. ♖h5 ♖cc1 46. ♖xh6 ♖g1+ 47. ♗f3 ♖b3+ 48. ♗e4 ♖b4+ 49. ♗e3 ♖d4+ 50. ♗e2 ♖b2+ 51. ♗f3 ♖xf2#

36... ♖xf2+ 37. ♗h3 ♖xf5+ After 38. ♖g4 ♖f2 wins so White resigned.

0-1

TOP PLACINGS

1	1	GM TIVIAKOV Sergei	2605	7,5
2	2	GM HILLARP PERSSON Tiger	2563	7,0
3	5	IM MERRY Alan B	2426	6,5
4	4	GM LEMOS Damian	2482	6,0
5	3	GM SLE ROUX Jean-Pierre	2542	6,0
6	13	FM STEFFENS Olaf	2178	5,0
7	6	IM AKSHAT Khamparia	2415	5,0
8	11	HILL Alistair	2199	5,0
9	7	IM RUDD Jack	2253	5,0
10	14	DURAND-LE LUDEC Brendan-Budok	2168	5,0

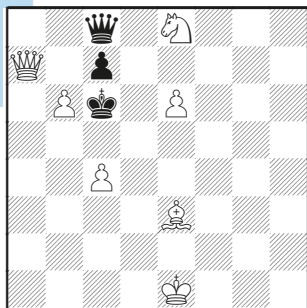
PROBLEM WORLD

by Christopher Jones

cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

Grandmaster of Chess Composition

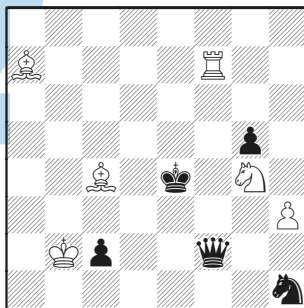
Solutions are given on page 318



John Rice (Surbiton)

Mate in 2

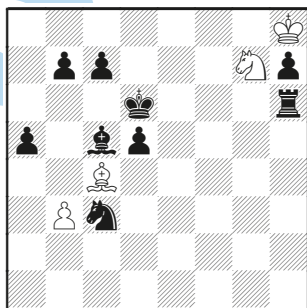
ORIGINAL



Kabe Moen (USA)

Helpmate in 2 - 2 solutions

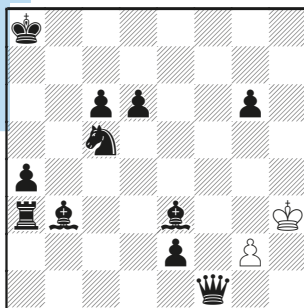
ORIGINAL



S. Manikumar (India)

Helpmate in 3 - 3 solutions

ORIGINAL



Ljubomir Ugren (Slovenia)

Helpmate in 6 - 3 solutions

ORIGINAL

QUOTES AND QUERIES



Vera Menchik

and Cheltenham 1928

By Alan Smith

Vera Menchik won the first Women's World Chess Championship at London in 1927. She dominated a twelve-player field and conceded just one draw. Vera was 21 years old. Recognition of her talent did not happen overnight, but she continued to improve quickly.

Vera was not in the top section at Hastings 1927-28. Instead she competed in Major A. Her score of +3=2-4 saw her finish seventh, but she made a fine score against the top half, losing only to Koltanowski; she defeated his co-victor Baratz and Ludwig Rellstab who was fourth.

This tough event gave her important experience. She again played in the second section at Cheltenham in early April. Here she faced a less illustrious field, but one that contained a former Scottish champion, Edmond Macdonald, and an ex-champion of the City of London Chess Club, Dr Stephen Smith.

Here are five of her games from this event. In round 1 she defeated Macdonald.

Vera Menchik - Rev Charles Fenton Bolland

Cheltenham 1928, Round 2

1.c4 e5 2.♘c3 c6?! Already an error. 2...♘f6 is better and if 3.g3 only then is 3...c6 an option.

3.d4 exd4 4.♖xd4 ♘f6 5.♙g5 ♙e7 6.♘f3 d6 7.e3 ♙f5 8.♙e2 ♘bd7 9.0-0 10.♖ac1 ♖e8 11.♖fd1 ♖b6 12.♖d2 ♖xd4 13.♘xd4 ♙g6 14.♙f3 ♘e5 15.♙e2 ♘fd7?? A positional howler. Black should have been happy to repeat moves with 15...♘ed7.

16.♙xe7 ♖xe7 17.f4 c5 Black avoids the loss of a piece, but loses control of two key squares in the process.

18.♘d5 Black could resign.

18...♙e8 19.♘b5 ♘c6 20.♘dc7 a6 21.♘xd6 ♘f6 22.♘xa8 ♙e4?? 23.♘xe8

1-0

Falkirk Herald 6th June 1928

In round 3 Vera demonstrated deep theoretical knowledge and tactical skill.

Dr Stephen Francis Smith - Vera Menchik

Cheltenham 1928, Round 3

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.♘ce2 c5 6.c3 ♘c6 7.f4 ♖b6 8.♘f3 f6 9.g3 cxd4 10.cxd4 fxe5 11.fxe5 ♙b4+ 12.♘c3 0-0 13.♙f4 ♙e7 14.♖b1 The first new move of the game 14.♖d2 g5 15.♘xg5 ♙xg5 16.♙xg5 ♘xd4 was played in Alapin-Maroczy Vienna 1908; Black won in 55 moves.

14...g5! 15.♙xg5 ♘dxe5 16.♘xe5 ♙xg5 17.♘xc6 The alternative 17.♘f3 is met by 17...♙e3! with pressure on d4. White's best was surely 17.♖g4!

17...bxc6 18.♖g4 h6 19.h4 e5 20.♖e2 exd4! 21.hxg5 ♙f5 22.♖h5 dxc3 23.♖xh6 ♖e3+ 24.♙e2 ♖d2+ 25.♘f2 ♙xb1+ 26.♘g1 ♖e1+ 27.♘h2 ♖xe2+ 27...♖f2+ 28.♘h3 ♖xh1+ 29.♘g4 ♙f5# is another mate.

28.♘h3 ♙f5+ 29.♘h4 29.g4 delays the inevitable.

29... ♖g4#

Daily Telegraph 11th April 1928

This win gave Vera the lead in the tournament. She was already a point ahead of the field.

Vera's round 4 game with Parsons went to three sessions before she won.

Vera Menchik - G. Powell

Cheltenham 1928, Round 5

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♗f3 e6 3.g3 b6 4.♙g2 ♙b7
5.0-0 d6 5...c5 or 5...♙e7 are both better.

6.d4 ♘bd7 7.♘c3 a6 Black needed to play
the thematic 7...♘e4.

8.♖c2 g6 9.e4 ♙g7 10.h3 0-0 11.♙e3
♘e8 12.♖ad1 ♖e7 13.♖d2 ♖b8 14.♙g5!
A clever probing move; Black should reply
14...♙f6.

14...f6 15.♙e3 ♖f7 16.d5 e5 17.♙h2 ♙h8
18.h4 ♖g8 19.♙h3 ♘f8 20.b4 ♙c8 21.♘g1
f5 22.f4 exf4 23.♙xf4 ♙e5 24.♘f3 ♖g7
24...♙xf4 25.♖xf4 ♘g7 was better.

25.♙h6 ♖f6 26.♘xe5 ♖xe5 27.♖de1! This
forces the win of material, as Black has no
time to clear the logjam on his back row.

27... ♖f6 28.exf5 gxf5 This maintains the
integrity of his pawn structure, but loses a piece.

29.♖xe8 ♘g6 30.♘e4 ♖f7 31.♖d4+ ♘e5
32.♖xe5! dxe5 33.♖xe5+ ♖g7 34.♘g5
♖e7 35.♙xg7+ ♖xg7 36.♖xg7+ ♙xg7
37.♙xf5 ♙xf5 38.♖xf5

1-0

Western Daily Press 12th April 1928

W.J. Fry - Vera Menchik

Cheltenham 1928, Round 6

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♙g5 ♙e7
5.e3 ♘bd7 6.♘f3 0-0 7.♖c1 b6 8.cxd5
exd5 9.♙b5 ♙b7 10.♙xf6 10.0-0 a6
11.♙a4 is the accepted way to treat this
position, as pioneered in a game Capablanca
- Teichmann Berlin 1913.

10... ♘xf6 11.♘e5 ♖d6 12.♙d3 a6 13.0-
0 c5 14.♘e2 c4 15.♙b1 b5 16.♘g3 g6
17.f4? ♘e4 18.♘xe4 dxe4 19.f5 ♙g5
20.♖e1 f6 21.♘g4 gxf5 22.♖xf5 ♙c8

23.♙xe4 Gunsberg's suggestion 23.♖xg5+
fxg5 24.♘e5 was a better way to obtain
compensation.

23...♙xf5 24.♙xf5 h5 25.h4 hxg4 26.hxg5
fxg5 27.♙g4 ♖ae8 28.♖c2? ♖xd4 29.exd4
♖xe1+ 30.♙h2 ♖e4 31.♙f3 ♖xd4...

0-1

Daily Telegraph 14th April 1928

This win secured first prize with a round to
spare. I don't get the impression that Vera
pressed too hard in round 7; meanwhile
Edmond Macdonald defeated Dr Smith to
finish second, two points behind Vera.

Vera Menchik - P.C. Littlejohn

Cheltenham 1928, Round 7

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 d5 3.d4 e6 4.♙g5 ♘bd7
5.e3 ♙e7 6.♘f3 0-0 7.♖c1 dxc4 8.♙xc4
c5 9.0-0 cxd4 10.exd4 ♘b6 11.♙d3 ♘e8
12.♙xe7 ♖xe7 13.♖e1 ♙d7 14.d5 ♖d6
15.dxe6 ♙xe6 16.♘d4 ♙c4 17.♖e3 ♙xd3
18.♖xd3 ♖e7 19.♘f5 ♖g5 20.♘d5 ♘xd5
21.♖xd5 ♖f4 22.b3 ♘f6 23.g3 ♖e4
24.♖d3 ♖xd3 25.♖xd3 Draw.

Western Daily Press 14th April 1928

Vera's success dissolved barriers and in
her next event, at Scarborough, she was
included in the top section. In round
one she defeated the British champion
Frederick Yates and though she finished
no higher than seventh equal, she made
an even score.

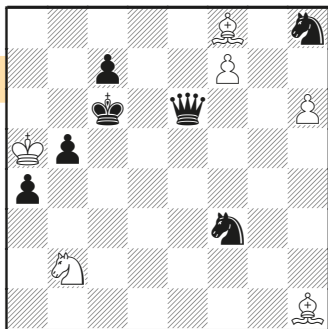
The next year she tied for second place with
Rubinstein at the Ramsgate 'Scheveningen'
tournament. Invitations to events in Paris,
Karlsbad and Barcelona followed.

Vera's example also opened doors for
others. Edith Holloway was included in
the top section at Scarborough 1929,
where she finished

Endgame Studies

by Ian Watson

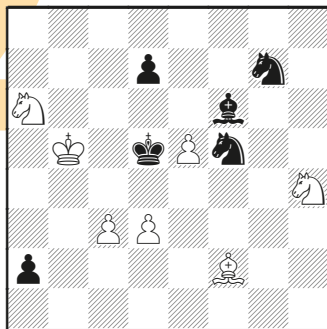
ian@irwatson.demon.co.uk



E Baird

BCM 1904

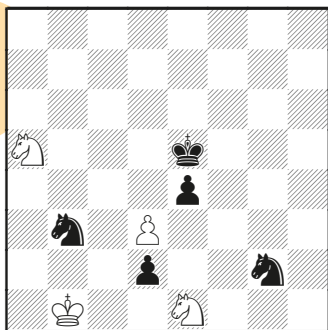
WIN



T Whitworth & M Bent

BCM 1995

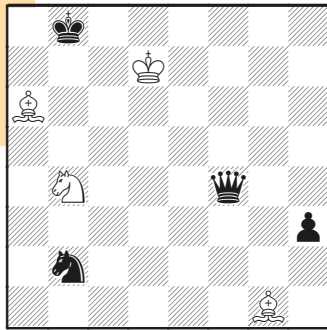
WIN



T Whitworth

BCM 1989

DRAW



T Whitworth & W Lemmey

BCM 1979

WIN

Gender Neutral?

I was hoping to give you a selection of studies by women composers for this women-in-chess issue of BCM. The difficulty is that I don't know the gender of most composers. There are online databases of chess compositions, but what you find is A. Smith or B. Jones, or overseas equivalents, and even if you get the first name, how to be sure it's a woman's? Some countries seem to put an -a on women's surnames. Of course, it's no problem if you've met them in person, but composers don't often meet each other. In chess problems, rather than studies, we do know with confidence of some female composers. There was the extraordinary **Edith Baird**, the most prolific composer of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the present day, there is **Julia Vysotska** whose fine compositions you can find at www.juliasfairies.com. Pseudonyms make the search even harder. For example, married couple Sally and Tony Lewis composed together and they used the name **T.Sal**. I guess there've been very few women study composers indeed, although I can't say with assurance. But maybe gender ignorance is best - it's the quality of the art that matters, not the gender of the composer.

In the chess solving world, in contrast, there are many more women. The 2019 ARVES study solving tourney was won by **Anne Haast**, ahead of many well-known leading male solvers. There's a special Elo list for chess solving, and it's notable that few of the women in it are seniors (60 or over), but a lot are juniors. I suppose women are getting more interested, and especially so recently.

Anyway, I did find a study by Edith Baird: one study only, among her innumerable problems. It's analytically complex, but my computer is happy with it. Baird was a strong OTB player, and well able to navigate through the variations. It goes **1.♖d3 ♜e3 2.♙c5 ♜d2+ 3.♘b4+ ♜xc5 4.f8♙+ ♜d6 5.♙xd6+ cxd6 6.♙xf3 ♘g6 7.h7 ♘h8 8.♙c6 a3 9.♙xb5**. There are many sidelines, which you can find on the database www.yacpdb.org.

REMEMBERING T. WHITWORTH – A GREAT STUDY COMPOSER

I have met a few of the world's study composers, and one in particular I'd like to celebrate this month, not because of gender, but because this composer was a previous writer of this study column, and died last month. T. Whitworth, together with J. Beasley, wrote the enjoyable book 'Endgame Magic', whose second edition in 2017 I reviewed in BCM. Whitworth taught history and used those skills to research earlier study composers' work, producing standard editions of the studies of Grin, Kubbel, Mattison and the Platov brothers. You can find a full tribute to Whitworth at www.jsbeasley.co.uk. Here are three of Whitworth's own compositions. And, yes, I do know *his* first name: Timothy.

The solutions to Timothy's studies are given on page 319.

SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS

(See page 312)

This month's problems

Having concentrated in recent issues on problems in which White forces mate in the stipulated number of moves, this month we shift the emphasis back to helpmates. But first there is a very approachable mate-in-2 problem by a distinguished former Editor of Problem World. In John's 2-mover you will see that mates are set for many black moves, but it is necessary to jeopardise this set play in order to make a threat. And when you identify the white unit that must make the key move an interesting choice awaits you! After that, in the helpmates, Black, playing first, is doing all he can to help White mate him.

A choice for the white pawn

In our first problem, 1...♖xe8 and 1...♖xe6 would be met by 2.♗xc7; and there are further set mates 1...♗d7/♗b7/cxb6 2.♗a8/♗a4/♗xb6. All of this is radically altered if White plays 1.bxc7, threatening 2.♗b6. We have 1...♗b8/♗a6/♗xc7/♗b7 2.cxb8♗/♗xa6/♗xc7/♗c5. All very nice, but there is no mate after 1...♗xe6 now! So the key is 1.b7, with a changed threat, 2.♗a6, and now the defences and refutations are as follows: 1...♗a8/♗xe6/♗xb7 2.bxa8♗/b8♗/♗c5. What a lot of play is extracted from 10 pieces!

Anticipatory self-pins...

...are one of the commonest themes in modern helpmates, and Kabe's first helpmate in this column is a good clear example of this strategy, in which (typically) the functions of the a7 bishop and the f7 rook are interchanged between solutions - 1.♗c5 ♔d3+ 2.♗d4 ♔d7 and 1.♗f5 ♔d5+ 2.♗f4 ♔b8. Another problem in which there are just 10 pieces - economy is a quality highly prized by composers.

Extended flight-paths

The very welcome contribution from a distinguished Indian composer features a striking geometric pattern. It's not at all easy to set a sound problem in which a king has such matching flight-paths in various directions - if you want to try your hand

at composing, a task like this is the sort of target you might set yourself! 1.♗e7 ♔d3 2.♗f8 ♔g6 3.♗e7 ♗e6; 1.♗a3 ♗h5 2.♗c5 ♗f4 3.♗b4 ♗d3 and 1.♗c6 ♗f5 2.♗b6 ♗e7 3.♗c6 ♗c8. It is of course also nice that the black bishop pursues the black king, then the black king pursues the black bishop and finally the black rook pursues the black king along the thematic lines.

The mighty white pawn!

Finally, Ljubomir's helpmate is an excellent example of a 'sub-genre' of long helpmates - the 'white pawn-minimal'. There are many helpmates in which the sole white pawn makes its way all the way to promotion ('Excelsior') in two solutions - but having three solutions makes this problem a rarer breed. The skill is in making the solutions varied and interesting, and although there are a couple of moves that recur in different solutions, the three essentially diverse lines of play resourcefully assembled represent a great success - 1.♗f3+ gxf3 2.♗e4 fxe4 3.♔d5 exd5 4.♗b3 dxc6 5.♗b7 c7 6.♗a7 c8♗; 1.♗f5+ g4 2.♗e6 gxf5 3.♗b3 fxe6 4.♗b8 e7 5.♗b7 e8♗ 6.♗a7 ♗c7; and 1.♗f8 g4 2.♗h6 g5 3.e1 ♗gxh6 4.♗e7 h7 5.♗a7 h8♗ 6.♗c8+ ♗xc8. Iron logic causes these sequences to work like clockwork. For instance, the black moves in the third solution could be played in zillions of different orders but for the fact that ♗f8 must be played first to unpin the white pawn and then ♗c8 must be delayed until the end because it gives check.

SOLUTIONS TO ENDGAMES

(See page 316)

Whitworth & Bent

1.♖c7+ ♘xe5 2.♗g6+ ♘d6 3.♖b6 ♗d4+ 4.♗xd4 ♗xd4 5.c4 ♗ge6 6.♗e8 mate.

3...♗e6 4.♗e8+ ♘d5 5.c4 mate. 3...♗d4 4.♗g3+ ♗e5 5.♗xe5 mate. In the main line, 5...♗b3 6.d4 a1♗ 7.c5+ ♗xc5 8.dxc5 mate.

Whitworth

1.♗c4+ ♘d4 2.♗xd2 ♗xd2+ 3.♖c1 ♗b3+ 4.♖d1 ♗e3+ 5.♖e2 ♗c1+ 6.♖d2 ♗xd3 7.♗f3+ exf3 stalemate.

Whitworth & Lemmey

1.♗h2 ♗xh2 2.♗c6+ ♘a8 3.♖c8 ♗b8+ 4.♗xb8 ♘a7 5.♖c7 h2 6.♗b7 h1♗ 7.♗xh1 ♗d3 8.♗c6+ ♘a6 9.♗g2 ♖b5 10.♗f1 ♖c4 11.♗e5+ ♘d4 12.♗xd3. A splendid study.

7...♗c4 8.♗b7 ♗a5 9.♗d5 ♗b7 10.♗c6+ ♘a8 11.♗d8, or 8...♗e5 9.♗c8 ♖a8 10.♗a6 ♖a7 11.♗b7.

In the main line, not 8.♗b7? ♗b4 9.♗d7 ♗a6+.

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